WILD THINGS

by

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rewrite by

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FADE IN:

MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE -- BLACK

INTERCUT -- QUICK FLASH-FORWARDS

INSIDE A STEAMY SHOWER -- A wet naked woman and man wrapped around each other in ecstasy -- legs, arms, hair, mouths.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

Moonlight reflects on a vehicle's shiny surface. FISTS THUD into flesh. O.s. -- a man slams off the hood, rebounds away.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

LOVERS -- caught in FREEZE-FRAMES of green neon -- off, on, off, on -- like a strobe's instant-images -- of gasping, tough sex.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

ON A GLEAMING POOL DECK of black-and-white tile -- two women in soaked, clinging clothes -- fight -- hands squeeze a throat.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

A SCREAM -- a sickening hollow THWACK -- an arc of blood, two teeth fall on dark stone.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

GUNSHOTS -- Blood sprays across the glass of a picture frame -- obscures the photo inside.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

THE SURFACE OF A SPARKLING SEA -- a distant emerald island. A 40-foot sloop APPEARS -- shapes on deck -- we are about to SEE --

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- then

SHARKS -- underwater -- rip something into a bloody cloud.

END MAIN TITLES.

FADE TO:

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DAY

A place of money and privilege. White coral buildings surround an open yard. Tile roofs rise among banyan trees and banana palms, shimmering before a blue blaze of sky.

Beyond the yard is the school's playing field and beyond that the waters of Biscayne Bay, dappled in sunlight where the sloops of the school's sailing class bob at their moorings.

For a moment all is quiet. Then, faintly, the HUM of many VOICES, rising and falling, LAUGHTER.

The CAMERA PANS to the open windows of a building somewhat larger than the others. The SOUNDS grow louder.

INT. BLUE BAY AUDITORIUM - DAY

A hundred high school kids sit before a raised, hardwood stage. The students are not unlike the campus, radiant, well-tended -- a veritable sea of adolescent sexuality -- bronze boys who seem to have just come from the boats or tennis courts -- girls in tight shorts riding high up shapely thighs, as...

SAM LOMBARDO strolls out onto the stage. The man is thirtyish, drop-dead handsome. Dressed not that differently from the kids, in an Izod polo shirt, khakis and boat shoes.

His entrance has an effect upon the audience, particularly upon the girls.

KAREN and JANELLE, 16, pretty blondes, whisper then giggle.

NICOLE, a dark-eyed beauty, 17 but going on 25, watches Sam's walk, then turns to the girl at her side...

KELLY VAN RYAN, 17, a fully-developed knockout.

NICOLE
When we graduate the only thing I'm going to miss is...
(with a nod to the stage)
Know what I mean?

Kelly's eyes are locked on Sam. Nicole has to nudge her.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Kelly?

KELLY
(still staring)
Oh yeah.

Sam is at the podium. He looks out across the audience. There are a couple of flirtatious whistles, laughter. Sam smiles, silencing them with a wave of his hand.

SAM
We've come to the halfway point in my senior seminars...

Cheers, applause. Sam waits for the kids to settle.

SAM (CONT'D)
Come on. Beats study hall, doesn't it?

JIMMY (O.S.)
No!

Boos as we FIND...

JIMMY LEACH, 18, grunge look, long hair. He sits with a clique of white trashy types, or at least what passes for such at Blue Bay School. Jimmy appears a bit more genuine, as does...

SUZIE TOLLER, a boyish brunette, seated nearby, but with just enough space between her and everyone else to mark her as a loner. She studies Sam Lombardo with a dark, sullen stare.

SAM
Thank you, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Hey, man, at least in study hall I could meditate.

KIRK (O.S.)
He means masturbate...

This remark is greeted by a chorus of laughter as we FIND...

KIRK, one of the golden boys, seated with Kelly and Nicole.

SAM
Something Kirk with which I'm sure you have hands-on experience.

Loud laughter. Sam quiets them again, then turns to the blackboard, where he begins to write, in big letters -- S-E-X. The kids start to cheer.

Sam writes another word -- C-R-I-M-E-S.

The cheering fades into silence.

SAM (CONT'D)
We've all heard the words, date rape, sexual harassment. We've talked about some of these things in this room.
(beat)
Our speakers today head up the Blue Bay Police Sex Crimes Unit -- Detectives Ray Duquette and Gloria Perez.
(beat)
They're here to give you what we hope will be a fresh perspective on these subjects, and to answer any questions you might have.

Sam turns to the wings, his hand out to welcome the visitors...

RAY DUQUETTE, mid-thirties, with the lanky build of a light heavyweight, walks out onto the stage. He's dressed in a dark suit, dark hair combed straight back above steel-rimmed glasses.

GLORIA PEREZ walks at his side. She's a good six inches shorter than Ray, with a sweet face. Attractive but no stunner.

About five kids applaud. Ray takes the podium.

RAY
Thank you for having us. We'll each talk for ten or fifteen minutes, then open it up to your questions...

IN THE AUDIENCE

Suzie Toller suddenly gets to her feet. As she passes behind Jimmy, we HEAR her VOICE, beneath her breath.

SUZIE
I'm not going to listen to this jack-off.

She marches down the aisle and bangs out the rear door.

Ray pauses, a dark look on his face, then goes on...

RAY
Let's begin with a question. What is a sex crime?

A moment.

JIMMY
Not getting any.

This draws a few laughs from the kids, a couple of thin smiles from Sam and Gloria. And none at all from Ray Duquette.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The kids change classes. Sam, Ray and Gloria CROSS the grass. The kids swarm past. A pair of girls flash by.

CAROLE
Have a nice weekend, Mr. Lombardo.

SAM
Hey, Carole, you too. And be good.

CAROLE
(beneath a pouty look)
I hate to be good.

The three adults ENTER an old wooden building.

INT. BUILDING - DAY

SAM
This is one of the original buildings. We have the offices here now.

The walls are paneled in wood, decorated with framed photographs. Gloria stops before one of the photos.

ANGLE ON PHOTOGRAPH

An old black-and-white, with that sepia caste harkening back to another age.

A handsome young man of perhaps 14 stands at the helm of a boat under sail. His hair is swept back, his eyes fixed upon an unseen horizon. There is something in this boy's pose, in the line of his jaw, in the clarity of his gaze, as if what he has fixed upon is the future itself.

GLORIA
Anybody in particular?

When no one answers, she turns to find Sam at her side. He stares at the picture, then looks at Gloria.

SAM
Sam Lombardo. The first. Class of 'Forty-Two.
(beat)
My father.

Gloria does a slow double-take, looking from Sam to the photo and back again.

VOICE (O.S.)
Can't seem to get rid of the Lombardos around here.

Sam and the detectives turn as a professorial-looking guy in a baggy brown suit (ART MADDOX) arrives on the scene.

SAM
Art. Say hello to Detectives Perez and Duquette.
(to the cops)
Art Maddox. A fellow guidance counselor.

Art and the detectives shake hands.

ART
So, did you set 'em all straight on the ugly facts of life?

SAM
I have the feeling, they got it down already. They're a step ahead of us, Artie.

Gloria seems to find this amusing. Ray stands at her side, looks at Sam. Sam feels it, makes eye contact with Ray -- a beat -- at which point, Ray puts a hand on Gloria's back.

RAY
I've got that two o'clock in town.

GLORIA
(nodding)
Back to the land of grownups.

The detectives shake hands once more with Sam and Art.

SAM
(to Gloria)
If old pictures interest you, come back some time, there's quite a collection down in the pagoda. I'll see you get a proper tour.

GLORIA
(smiling)
I'd like that.

Ray opens a door for her. The detectives pass through it.

Art claps Sam on the shoulder, then walks off down the hallway. Sam remains near the doors, watching as...

ANGLE ON THE DRIVE LEADING TO THE SCHOOL

Ray and Gloria walk past half a dozen expensive cars -- Range Rovers, Beamers and Mercedes, to a plain, white Ford Taurus, which they get into and drive away.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL - LATER

Cheerleaders perform a sensual dance on the porch of a wooden pagoda. A rugby team runs drills on the grass, as out on the bay, six tiny racing sloops tack toward the docks.

ANGLE ON DOCKS

As the sloops enter the narrow channel between the slips one student from each boat jumps onto the dock where he or she sets about tying off the boat.

Sam is on one of the boats. Jimmy Leach is at the rudder.

SAM
(loud enough to be heard by his class)
Okay, you guys. Good work. Now coil those dock lines and I'll see you all on Monday.

He watches his class clamber up the docks. His eye falls upon the pagoda, the dancing cheerleaders -- Kelly Van Ryan in work-out tights -- bare arms reaching for the sky.

EXT. SCHOOL DOCKS - SAM & JIMMY - LATER

hosing down boats, stowing sails. They look up as...

A HUGE POWER BOAT glides past. The docks rock in its wake.

JIMMY
All right. I could party on that.

Sam just laughs at him.

SAM
That's about all it's good for.
(beat)
That's the one to have.

He points to a beautiful triple-masted schooner headed out of the bay, under sail.

SAM
The Windward Passage. I crewed on that one summer.
(beat)
Long time ago.

He pulls his eyes from the boat, sets about coiling a line.

JIMMY
You know, I want to thank you for getting me into this class... No way was my old man going to spring for the fees...

SAM
Hey, you're working for it.
(beneath a laugh)
Least you're supposed to be.

He tosses Jimmy the coiled line. Jimmy's caught off-guard, but snatches it at the last second, then shares the laugh with Sam.

VOICE (O.S.)
Can I play too? Or is it just for boys?

Sam and Jimmy turn to find Kelly Van Ryan at the far end of the dock. She's fresh from cheerleader practice, in a white blouse knotted at the bottom to REVEAL a flat, tanned stomach; open at the top to REVEAL the swelling of her breasts. She favors Sam with a coy smile.

KELLY
So who's washing your car this weekend, Mr. Lombardo?
(off Sam's blank look)
The senior car wash, remember?
(beat)
Tamara's making a schedule. She said you bought a coupon but you're not on anybody's list.

Sam smiles, remembering.

SAM
Well, you know. Figured I'd buy a ticket, support the effort. Washing that old Jeep of mine's kind of a waste of time, don't you think?

Sam places the coiled hose on top of a locker then starts up the dock, Jimmy at his side. Kelly falls in with them.

KELLY
Not at all. How about if Nicole and I do it? We're working as a team.

Sam just looks at her. She looks back -- big, pleading eyes.

SAM
Okay, try me on Sunday. I'm going out to the Everglades on Saturday. You guys can wash the mud off.

KELLY
Deal.
(beat)
You know, I just looked out front. My ride wasn't there. You suppose you could give me one?

Sam doesn't answer right away. He looks toward the school.

KELLY (CONT'D)
You wouldn't want me to walk, would you? I mean like, something bad might happen.

Sam hesitates, momentarily at a loss, then turns to Jimmy, who seems to regard Kelly with something akin to physical pain.

SAM
What about you, Jimbo, you need a ride?

JIMMY
(still looking at Kelly)
What?

SAM
A ride. You want one?

JIMMY
Yeah. But I got my bike.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DAY

Sam's Jeep rolls out of the drive, Jimmy's bike in back, meaning that Jimmy and Kelly are squeezed into the passenger seat, which is fine with Jimmy. Kelly's thigh is pressed against his. His arm pushes against her breast. Kelly is not so happy.

As they near the school's entrance, they come upon a beat-to-shit VW bug -- stalled at a stop sign.

A John Deere tractor mower sits nearby. A groundsman -- a tall black guy with a shaved head, waits at the wheel of the bug as...

Suzie Toller -- in black platform shoes, a T-shirt and cutoff jeans, leans over the engine, fiddling with the car's linkage.

Sam pulls up next to the bug and stops.

SAM
We got room for one more, Suzie. You need a ride?

Kelly rolls her eyes as Suzie turns to look at them.

KELLY
Jesus. Where'd she get those shoes? Whores-4-Less?

Suzie's eyes go cold. She signals the groundsman, who turns the key. The CAR SPLUTTERS to life. Suzie flashes a smile, then sticks out her tongue -- which has been pierced by a silver stud.

KELLY (CONT'D)
That's cute.

Suzie gives her the finger. Sam makes eye contact with Suzie, offers a sad smile, while putting the Jeep in gear.

KELLY (CONT'D)
(to Suzie)
I hope you swallow it.

Jimmy turns, waving to Suzie as the Jeep pulls away.

EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Magnificent old mansions occupy five-acre bay-front parcels amid lush, tropical settings.

Sam's Jeep stops before a pair of gates with the words "VAN RYAN" woven into their wrought-iron design. Beyond the gates a long drive leads toward a huge stone house. Kelly jumps out, punches in a code. The gates swing open.

KELLY
Don't forget the car wash.

SAM
I won't.

SANDRA VAN RYAN, Kelly's mom, big, sexy, aggressive, a young 42 in a string bikini, comes out from the side of the house. When she sees the Jeep, she starts down the drive.

Kelly waves to Sam, then walks up the drive. When she sees her mother coming toward her, her face hardens.

SANDRA
Is that Sam Lombardo?

KELLY
(sarcastic)
Hi, Mom.

SANDRA
Sam! Hi!

Sam has already hung a U.

Sandra comes through the gate and up to the Jeep.

Jimmy is checking her out. All eyes.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
(to Sam; as if Jimmy wasn't even there)
What? You're going to drive off without even saying hi?

SAM
Hi, Sandy.

SANDRA
Why don't you come in, have a drink?

SAM
Can't. Got a passenger.

Sandra looks down her nose at Jimmy.

SANDRA
He can wait.

Sam glances past her, to Kelly, who stands languidly at the front of the house, watching.

SAM
I can't, Sandy. I've got to run.

SANDRA
I'll bet.
(then, softening)
Look, Sam. Why don't you come by this weekend. We'll take the boat out...

SAM
(cutting her off)
Sorry, Sandy. I've got plans.

SANDRA
What? Running over alligators with that silly swamp jalopy when you could be sailing a real boat...

SAM
Swamp's where it's at, Sandy. Gives you a look into the muck we all crawled out of. You ought to try it some time.

Sandra gives him a hard stare, then marches off toward the house.

CLOSE ON KELLY

still at the door, a cold smile on her face.

FADE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Neat little stucco houses -- some not so neat -- simmer in tropical heat.

A BMW Z-3 Roadster stops at the head of the cul-de-sac. Nicole is driving. Kelly sits beside her.

NICOLE
This is it?

Kelly looks at a pad of paper, nods.

KELLY
Four-thirty-seven.

They pass a couple of teenagers playing basketball in a driveway, a guy mowing his yard.

NICOLE
Nice.

KELLY
What do you want, he's a teacher for Christ's sake.
(beat)
It's here. Pull over.

Nicole does, before one of the not-so-neat houses. Sam's muddy Jeep Wrangler is parked in the drive. Behind that is a red Mercedes convertible.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Sam and BARBARA, 28, a lean, beautiful country-clubber roll on the bed. Barbara is dressed for tennis. Sam wears a baggy pair of khaki shorts. Barbara struggles to escape. Sam grabs a leg, kisses the back of her knee.

He pushes up the little white skirt, kissing her between her thighs.

BARBARA
(getting just a little breathless)
Sam, come on... I'm gonna be late for my game...

Sam keeps at it. She's starting to weaken.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Not that I'm going to be much good after last night...

SAM
Eat a power bar.

Barbara starts to giggle. He's just about got her when...

The DOORBELL RINGS. Sam lets go. Barbara sighs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Sam goes to the front door, opens it, to find...

Kelly and Nicole, holding plastic pails full of rags. The girls are dressed in Blue Bay High T-shirts, cropped to REVEAL flat tummies, shorts and running shoes.

GIRLS
Hi, Mr. Lombardo.

Sam looks over the girls -- a small, exasperated smile.

KELLY
Look, he forgot. I knew it.

SAM
No I didn't. Check out the Jeep. It's nice and dirty for you.
(beat)
But you might want to wait a minute. The Mercedes is leaving.

NICOLE
You mean that isn't yours too?

The girls giggle. Sam smiles.

KELLY
Where's the hose? We can set up.

SAM
In back of the garage.

As they walk away, he is joined by Barbara. She watches the girls with an appraising eye.

BARBARA
Is that Sandra Van Ryan's kid?

SAM
Kelly.

BARBARA
She's going to wash your Jeep?

SAM
Senior class fund-raising gig. I told 'em they could hose down the Jeep.
(off Barbara's look)
Hey, come on. It's for a good cause.

Barbara laughs at him.

BARBARA
Sam the philanthropist.
(a beat)
Tomorrow, right?

Sam nods. Another kiss.

EXT. SAM'S DRIVEWAY - SAME

As Barbara goes to her car she sees the girls coming from behind the garage. She looks at Sam, standing in his doorway, watching the girls. When he sees Barbara looking at him, he shrugs, then waves.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - SAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Kelly and Nicole, looking very much like the finalists in a wet T-shirt derby, ring the bell.

Sam answers. He looks them over. A couple of houses down he can see the guy with the mower, dumping grass into a can, watching the girls, then turning to walk back to his house.

SAM
So, where you off to now?

KELLY
Aren't you forgetting something?
(off Sam's look)
Your coupon. We gotta have it.

SAM
Jeez, that thing... Can't you...

KELLY
(smiling)
Rules are rules, Mr. Lombardo.

Nicole laughs.

SAM
All right. I'll have to look for it.

KELLY
(as he starts to go)
Mr. Lombardo.
(as he stops)
We're running kind of late. How about if Nicole goes on to the Mansons? You could give me a ride when you find the ticket.

Sam looks at her, as does Nicole.

SAM
Give me a minute.

He hurries from the room. Kelly turns to Nicole, giving her the eye, pointing toward the drive.

NICOLE
(mouthing the words)
Are you sure?

Kelly nods, a mischievous smile on her face.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - SAME

Sam is rummaging through drawers. He stops when he hears the SOUND of a CAR. He goes to the window in time to see Nicole's BMW headed down his street.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Sam ENTERS the room to find Kelly just inside the doorway, where the water from her wet clothing has formed little pools on the linoleum.

Sam looks at the water. He looks at Kelly. She moves a step closer, allowing the door to sw :g shut behind her.

EXT. SAM'S NEIGHBORHOOD

A long, slow, Antonioni PAN -- time passes -- the cul-de-sac -- the sparkling lawns -- the kids with the basketball -- a jogger passing by...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAM'S PORCH - LATER

The front door. The door opens. Kelly comes out, fast, slamming the door behind her. She walks down the drive.

There are tears on her face. As she hits the street, she begins to run.

The man with the mower is now seated on his porch, drinking beer. He watches as the girl runs by.

The teenagers are still playing hoops. They stop as Kelly jogs past, sobbing. They watch as she hits the end of the cul-de-sac and DISAPPEARS around a corner.

EXT. THE EVERGLADES - DAY

Sam, perched in the pilot's seat of a beat-to-shit old air boat, rips through the Florida swamp land.

He glides across channels of water, then turns into the tall grass which whips at the hull of his boat. Bits and pieces of debris fly through the air. Sam smiles, swinging the boat through a series of wide, sliding turns.

Suddenly he spots something. He throttles down gliding into a shallow pool where... A HUGE ALLIGATOR, aware it has been found out, whips about, stirring up mud, then scuttling OUT OF SIGHT

SAM
Sly old fucker. How you got so big, wasn't it?

Sam sits for a moment in the silence. He pulls a pair of binoculars from beneath his seat and looks through them.

ANGLE ON HORIZON

All we SEE is a shabby collection of whitewashed buildings shimmering in the last long light of afternoon.

Sam watches for some time. At last he lowers the binoculars, revs up his engine and leaves.

ANGLE ON SAM'S BOAT

as it moves away, as SEEN from water level where...

The old gator has risen once more -- just the eyes -- a cold primordial intelligence, gazing out, unblinking across the murky waters of the swamp.

EXT. SAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam's Wrangler pulls in next to Barbara's Mercedes. The Jeep is muddy once more. So is Sam. He gets out.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - SAME

Sam ENTERS. The house is dark.

SAM
Barbara?

Nothing. He CROSSES the living room and starts down the hallway, where a faint light issues from beneath the bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Sam opens the door. He hears the SOUND of RUNNING WATER. He walks across the room and into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Clouded mirrors, a shower stall full of steam. Behind the glass door we SEE an indistinct shape, moving about in the hot water. Sam opens the shower door. The steam clears to REVEAL Barbara's gorgeous athletic body.

BARBARA
It's hot in here, just the way you like it.

She grabs his shirt, pulling him into the shower's flow. They kiss. She pulls his shirt open, loosens his pants. His clothes fall away. Sam pushes her up against the tile wall, hard. She holds to his shoulders, nails sinking into his flesh, wrapping her legs around his hips as...

The water, dark with swamp mud, spirals down the drain.

EXT. VAN RYAN ESTATE - NIGHT

Kelly Van Ryan sits on the dock, looking back toward the huge stone house, where...

A YELLOW LIGHT burns in one of the upstairs windows.

Kelly has a shotgun laid across her knees. Slowly, she raises the gun, pointing at the yellow window.

She holds it there for some time, then, softly, to herself...

KELLY
Bang...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - VAN RYAN ESTATE - NEXT DAY

Sunlight streams through open windows, mingling with loud sighs of pleasure... Sandra Van Ryan on top of FRANKIE CONDO, a big, buffed-out Cuban. They're making love on the bed. She throws her head back -- an explosion of hair -- gasps -- an orgasm is near, as...

A cordless PHONE RINGS on the night table. They try to ignore it. No dice. Sandra groans, finally pulling away.

SANDRA
Goddamnit!
(she answers)
Hello.

COMPUTER VOICE (V.O.)
Hello, this is the attendance office at Blue Bay School. Your son or daughter is absent today, Monday...

SANDRA
Jesus H. Christ!

She hangs up hard. Sits on the edge of the bed.

FRANKIE
What?

Sandra waves him off. She pulls on a T-shirt, then grabs up the phone once more, punching in a number.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DAY

Desk, files, a terrarium full of swamp lizards, above which a photo of the Windward Passage decorates the wall. There's a Waterford bowl on the desk -- etched with "Sam Lombardo -- Blue Bay Educator of the Year."

Sam is working on the computer. The PHONE RINGS. He answers.

SAM
Counseling.

INTERCUT - SANDRA/SAM PHONE CONVERSATION

Sandra seated on the bed, one long leg tucked beneath her.

SANDRA
Sam, Sandy Van Ryan.

Frankie's eyes go cold when he hears the word "Sam."

In his office, Sam pushes himself away from the computer, stiffening noticeably.

SAM
Sandy... What's up?

SANDRA
Listen, Kelly skipped school. Have you talked to her?

SAM
No.

SANDRA
Shit. Here we go again.

SAM
Didn't you see her this morning?

SANDRA
To tell you the truth, I haven't seen her since Friday.

BOOM -- A SHOTGUN BLASTS outside Sandra's window. She jumps. BOOM, BOOM -- more BLASTS. She jumps up to look outside.

SANDRA'S POV - KELLY

stands at the edge of the bay, launching skeet then blasting them high above the water.

BACK TO SCENE

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Never mind. I found her.
(a long beat)
Listen, Sam. It was good seeing you the other day.
(beat)
I haven't found anyone else can handle the Jonathan like you can.

She glances at Frankie -- who has heard enough. He gives her a long hard look, then rolls from the bed to walk from the room.

Sam remains silent, watching the lizards with their blank, unblinking eyes.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Look. I know you're seeing Barbara Baxter. So what?

SAM
So maybe I'm a one-woman man.

Sandra laughs.

SANDRA
Right.
(beat)
You really think you're gonna get one of these Blue Bay women to marry you?

Sandra pauses to laugh once more.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Grab a clue, Sam. You're a hired hand around here. Enjoy it while it lasts.

SAM
Goodbye, Sandra.

Sam puts down the phone, looks at it -- a long moment as -- the barest hint of a smile plays upon his face.

Sandra slams down her phone. She looks to the bay, to the sleek racing sloop floating beyond the private dock.

SANDRA
The nerve of some people.

EXT. VAN RYAN ESTATE - DAY

The SHOTGUN BLASTS away. Kelly pauses to reload. She catches sight of...

Sandra, approaching from the main house.

SANDRA
You seem to find guns therapeutic. Maybe I oughta try it.

Kelly lets the gun's barrel drift over Sandra, then turns to walk away. She moves toward the guest house. A used-brick cottage tucked among the gnarled branches and roots of a huge banyan tree. Sandra follows.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Let me guess, some boy didn't call and screwed up the weekend. So you're taking the day off.

Kelly looks toward the main house, in time to see...

Frankie walk from the bedroom and dive into the pool.

KELLY
Which one of your "bodyguards" is that?

SANDRA
Whichever one I want.

Kelly turns away, starts for the guest house once more.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - DAY

PAN to REVEAL room -- the gun case, the animal trophies, the photos -- One of a stately old gentleman in an elaborate wicker chair, a cane at his side, a bowler on his knee. Others of Kelly and a handsome middle-aged man in safari gear, posing with their rifles above slain wildebeests and bison.

Sandra and Kelly ENTER. Kelly puts down the shotgun, turns, tears in her eyes.

SANDRA
Okay, what's the matter?

KELLY
You notice my new jumper?

Kelly does a three-sixty, like a model on a runway.

KELLY (CONT'D)
My friends buy me clothes, so I don't look like trash.

SANDRA
I would hardly say you look like trash.

KELLY
No thanks to you.

She sits on the bed. Sandra moves to stand over her, angry now.

SANDRA
Come off of it.
(a beat)
You run with all these little trust fund brats... They think money grows on trees. It doesn't. Believe me. And a lot of your little friends are gonna learn that one the hard way.
(beat)
I'm trying to spare you that.

Kelly goes to one shoulder on the bed, sobbing now. Her mother continues to stand over her, suddenly more perplexed than angry.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Kelly. What is it?

KELLY
I miss Dad.

SANDRA
Jesus.
(a long beat)
Well, I do too, sometimes...

KELLY
No you don't.

SANDRA
He didn't have to kill himself, Kelly. He could have gone out and gotten a job. Christ, he could've found another rich woman... He never had a problem fucking my friends when we were married.

She pauses as Kelly cries all the harder.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I don't know why he did it. I really don't...

Her voice trails away, as meanwhile Kelly has drawn herself up into a fetal position on the bed. The sobbing has stopped but her shoulders continue to shake. Sandra sits on the edge of the bed, reaches over to rub Kelly's back.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Can I get you anything?

Kelly shakes her head, no.

Her mother looks at her, clearly at a loss. At last she stands. She is headed out of the room when Kelly says something, but the words are indistinct, as her fists are pressed against her mouth.

SANDRA
What, honey? I can't hear you.

There is a long beat as Kelly collects herself. She stares at the wall, her eyes filled with tears, but when she speaks she enunciates each word.

KELLY
I said. I was raped.

Sandra looks as if she has been struck.

SANDRA
What?

KELLY
I was raped.
(a long beat)
By Sam Lombardo.

Sandra moves over to the bed, sits once more.

SANDRA
He... Sam Lombardo?

KELLY
Yes. God, Mom...

Kelly begins to cry. Sandra pulls her upright, cradling her in her arms, eyes on fire.

EXT. BLUE BAY POLICE STATION - DAY

An old Spanish-style building sits before a neat square of grass.

SANDRA (V.O.)
My daughter does not get raped in Blue Bay!

INT. STATION HOUSE - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Sandra slams a fist on the conference table.

Kelly is seated between her mother and her mother's attorney, TOM BAXTER. Baxter sports an Italian suit and a lethal Alexander Haig look.

Seated across from these three are Ray, Gloria and BRYCE HUNTER, the local D.A.

Silence follows Sandra's outburst. Baxter reaches to squeeze Sandra's shoulder. Kelly puts her face in her hands.

RAY
(in a quiet voice)
You're saying that Kelly was raped by Sam Lombardo.

SANDRA
That's right.

Ray and Gloria exchange looks. Gloria in particular looks slightly stunned.

GLORIA
The guidance counselor at Blue Bay?

SANDRA
(sarcastically)
The guidance counselor at Blue Bay.

GLORIA
We understand your feelings, Ms. Van Ryan. But please, we'd like some time with Kelly. We'd like to take her statement alone.

Baxter nods, yes. Sandra looks at Kelly.

SANDRA
Are you okay for this?

Kelly nods.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
The man must be insane to think he can do this to me...

Tom Baxter takes her by the arm as Ray CROSSES the room to open the door. Bryce Hunter walks out with them.

Gloria takes a seat closer to Kelly. When she speaks, she is very calm and quiet.

GLORIA
How are you, Kelly? Would you like to take a break for a minute?

KELLY
(shaking her head)
I just want to get it over with. My mom's making me do this. I just want to forget it.

GLORIA
I know you do.

She waits as Ray sets up a camera on a tripod.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
We'd like to videotape the statement if that's all right with you.

Kelly shrugs.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I know this is not pleasant, Kelly. But these are serious charges and we need to know everything that happened between you and Mr. Lombardo.
(beat)
Are you ready?

Kelly nods.

CLOSE ON VIDEO MONITOR - KELLY'S STATEMENT

KELLY
He started rubbing my shoulders. Said I must be sore after washing cars. I... I let him. I mean he's a nice guy.
(beat)
I don't know... It was so fast. I closed my eyes. I remember his hands moved to my breasts. I mean just for a second it was nice... I forgot where I was. I mean he's so gorgeous...

PULL BACK to REVEAL...

INT. STATION HOUSE - DAY

Ray, Gloria and Bryce Hunter stand at one end of the long conference table, watching the playback of Kelly's tape.

BACK TO VIDEOTAPE

KELLY
The next thing... his hand was in my shorts... you know, from behind. His fingers... his fingers...

GLORIA (O.S.)
Take your time.

KELLY
They were in me. Both places... you know.

GLORIA (O.S.)
I understand.

KELLY
He said something like, "Do you want it dirty?" or something.
(MORE)

KELLY
(beat)
I tried to turn away, but he pushed me to the floor.

GLORIA (O.S.)
Was there penetration? Did he put himself inside you?

KELLY
Yes. I said stop. I screamed. I mean that's how it sounded in my head. He hurt me...

GLORIA (O.S.)
(as Kelly breaks into tears)
That's okay, Kelly. You're doing fine.
(beat)
But I have to ask you something here. When you say it hurt. Was this the first time a man was inside you?

KELLY
No. I've done it a couple of times, I mean with guys I dated. But this hurt... like, he was built... you know...

GLORIA (O.S.)
He was large?

Kelly nods, starts to break down again, then holds it off.

GLORIA (O.S., CONT'D)
Did you try to fight him?

KELLY
I... he had my wrists pinned behind me. I remember my hands were cold.

GLORIA (O.S.)
Then what?

KELLY
He kept saying, "Let it happen, let it happen." Then he just stopped.

GLORIA (O.S.)
You mean he withdrew...

KELLY
Not at first. He was still inside but he wasn't moving or anything... He said we had this secret. And that now he'd be able to help me... because we were close... Something like that. I don't know. It's hard to remember, exactly.

GLORIA (O.S.)
Try, Kelly.

KELLY
I know one thing he said. It was when... when he took himself out and was standing up.
(beat)
He said, "Don't worry, I didn't come." I can't forget that. He said, "No little girl can ever make me come."

The tape is paused -- FREEZES on Kelly's face ON SCREEN.

BACK TO RAY, GLORIA & HUNTER

HUNTER
"No little girl can ever make me come." Jesus. Too bad. We might have some physical evidence.

Ray and Gloria stare at the screen.

GLORIA
I don't know. It feels wrong.

Ray and Hunter look at her.

HUNTER
Why?

GLORIA
I think she's acting. I think she set it up to be alone with him because she wanted him to come on to her.
(beat)
I think maybe she's upset that he didn't...

RAY
Or maybe she thought that was what she wanted and she got a little more than she bargained for...

HUNTER
The line I get on this guy, is that he's done half the women in Blue Bay.

GLORIA
That doesn't make him a child rapist.
(beat)
There's something else. This girl's had some problems. Wrecked a couple of her mom's cars. Ran away...

HUNTER
Where's this coming from?

GLORIA
I worked Juvenile in Dade County for three years. We had a missing persons on Kelly Van Ryan for two weeks... Maybe a year ago... The family kept it out of the papers.

RAY
That would make it about the time of her old man's suicide. You don't think that could explain some erratic behavior?

GLORIA
All I'm saying is, I think we should go slow here.

Hunter puts his hands together, thinking. He looks from Ray to Gloria, then back to Ray.

HUNTER
I want a full-scale investigation.

GLORIA
You know what that will mean for Lombardo.

HUNTER
I don't care. You heard that girl's statement. I think he's dirty. Get me a case.

Gloria and Ray watch as Hunter gets up and leaves the room.

GLORIA
Well you were a big help. You know what's going to happen if we go full-bore on this.

Ray looks at the screen.

RAY
It's our job, Gloria.

GLORIA
Hunter's making it our job because Sandra Van Ryan's got a bug up his ass. You know that as well as I do.
(beat)
We're gonna trash this guy's life and I keep asking myself if it's really necessary.

Ray thinks this over. He continues to study the screen.

CLOSE ON SCREEN - KELLY'S FACE

RAY (O.S.)
Yeah, well, maybe you're wrong about him. Maybe he's got it coming.

BEGIN MONTAGE - INVESTIGATION

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Ray takes notes, talks with neighbors, kids, lawn mower man.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gloria talks with students -- Jimmy, Nicole, others.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam sits at his desk, toying with a pencil. He watches students pass -- no smiles, no waves, an occasional dark look.

Through the press of students Sam sees Art at the door of his office. The two men look at one another. At which point...

Gloria, followed by Ray, steps INTO SCENE. The detectives shake hands with Art. As Art turns to close the door, Sam falls within his line of vision. Art looks away. The door swings shut.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL DOCKS - LATER

The sky has begun to color. Art Maddox stands on the grass at the end of the channel separating the slips, watching as...

A lone sailboat tacks toward the school.

ANGLE ON BOAT - SAM & JIMMY

Sam drops his sail, leaving himself just enough momentum to cruise expertly into the little channel then into the slip.

Art watches as Jimmy jumps from the boat, ties it off.

SAM
That's good, Jimbo. I'll see you on Monday.

Jimmy hesitates, he wants to say something. Sam waves him off. Jimmy gives Art a hard look and heads for the grass.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to Art, nodding after Jimmy)
What's left of my sailing class.

Art studies the dock between his feet.

SAM (CONT'D)
Talk to me Artie.

ART
Kelly Van Ryan...

SAM
... is accusing me of rape. Jimmy told me. Apparently I'm the last to know...

ART
Sam... I...
(a long beat)
Sandra Van Ryan's been on the horn with every member of the school board all day long. She's pushing for suspension...

SAM
This is insane.

Art shakes his head.

ART
All I can tell you Sam, is hang in there. They clear you of this mess, you get reinstated, with back pay...

SAM
That's great. I'll just tell my creditors I'm not a rapist. No problem... Shit.
(beat)
I can't believe the board's going to act without even hearing my side of it.

ART
The Van Ryan family created Blue Bay. They built the school... Sandra Van Ryan calls up the board and says kiss my ass, they say, left, right, or in the middle.
(beat)
You're gonna need some help on this one, Sam. You're gonna need a lawyer, and he'd better be a good one.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Typical of its kind -- a Blockbuster Video, a 7-Eleven, half a dozen small businesses, one of which, sandwiched between a donut shop and the Mongolian Beef Bowl, bears the sign: "KEN BOWDEN -- ATTORNEY AT LAW."

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sam sits in a cramped waiting room, leafing through a magazine.

An attractive young SECRETARY sits a few feet away, behind her desk. Her PHONE RINGS. She picks it up, then turns to Sam, favoring him with a flirtatious smile.

SECRETARY
Mr. Bowden will see you now.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ken Bowden, a slightly oily-looking young man in a nice suit and a large, padded neck brace, rises to shake Sam's hand.

KEN
Sam, hey, it's been a while.
(beat)
Looked for you at the ten year reunion. You missed out. Three days at the Disneyworld Hotel... Partied ourselves silly.

Sam nods.

KEN (CONT'D)
Couple of your old flames were there. You remember Jill, with the knockers.

Ken holds his hands out in front of his chest.

KEN (CONT'D)
Blew up like the Goodyear blimp.

Sam forces a smile.

KEN (CONT'D)
But check this...

SAM
(interrupting)
Ken. I'm in some trouble. I need an attorney and you're the only one I know. So I figured I'd start here.

Ken stops, puts on a serious face.

KEN
Well, I'm glad you did. And I'm sorry.
(folding his hands before him)
Why don't you tell me about it.

Sam looks at him. He starts to speak, then checks himself.

SAM
What did you do to your neck?

Ken puts a hand to his throat, as if aware of the brace for the first time.

KEN
Oh, this... chiropractor did a number on me.

He takes the brace off, tossing it on his desk.

KEN (CONT'D)
I don't really have to wear the thing all the time.
(beat)
A guy from the insurance was here.

Ken smiles. Sam looks slightly ill.

KEN (CONT'D)
Go ahead, Sam. Shoot. Let's see what we've got here.

EXT. A BLUE BAY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Trendy nouveau. A alet parks Sam's Jeep.

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

Sam walks across a tiled entry. He looks tired, but smiles at the maitre d'.

SAM
Georgie, hey. I'm meeting Barbara. She here yet?

GEORGE looks stiff, maybe a little nervous. Sam picks up on it. He scans the room...

ANGLE ON ROOM

Dimly-lit, crowded, but we PICK OUT Barbara, stunning in a delicate white sun dress, tanned arms resting upon a table.

Sam starts toward her. George reaches out tc touch his arm.

GEORGE
Mr. Lombardo...

Sam ignores him, threading his way among the people at a lavish bar, then stopping short as he sees who Barbara is with -- her father, Tom Baxter.

Tom Baxter sees Sam, gets to his feet.

BAXTER
This is not appropriate Lombardo.

Sam steps to one side, makes eye contact with Barbara.

Barbara has tears in her eyes. She looks at Sam, then shakes her head, looking away.

SAM
Barbara...

BAXTER
You're finished in Blue Bay, Lombardo. You've been scratching at the door long enough...
(as Sam faces him)
I ever see you around my daughter, you're going to be finished, period.

The two men square off, but already we can SEE Georgie, trailed by a pair of beefy characters in blue blazers making their way across the room.

Sam sees them too. He takes a final look at Barbara. When she refuses to meet his eye, he pushes past Baxter, through the crowd and out of the restaurant.

EXT. AN EVERGLADES ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Red neon identifies it as Jim's Recovery Room. A handful of trucks sit in a dirt parking lot, Sam's Jeep among them.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

The air is thick with smoke. Locals shoot pool. The walls are decorated with dusty fishing nets and inflated blowfish.

An aging BARMAID -- good-looking -- once, runs a rag around a pitcher, looks down the bar, smiles, finding...

Sam, alone, awaiting service.

BARMAID
Sam, honey... Haven't seen you in a while. How's life treatin' you?
(off Sam's look)
That bad, huh? Well, you come to the right place.

EXT. ROADHOUSE - LATER

Sam walks outside. He stands in the red glow of neon light, looking toward the road... On the opposite side of which...

... sits a sorry little collection of whitewashed stucco bungalows, identified by a green neon sign as the Glades Motel.

Beyond the motel are the Everglades, a great expanse of darkness.

Sam stares at the motel. At last he gets in his Jeep. As he EXITS the lot, a second pair of headlights flashes on.

EXT. EVERGLADES - NIGHT

A deserted two-lane road cuts through the swamp. Trees bearded with moss appear as ghostly shapes in the lights of Sam's Jeep.

INT./EXT. SAM'S JEEP - MOVING - SAME

Sam drives -- a tired face. Soft MUSIC on the RADIO.

Something APPEARS in the road, caught for a moment in the headlights. Sam swerves, whirls his head around, sees...

A GATOR sliding off the shoulder and into the murky water.

Sam lets out some air, relaxing a bit, then catches sight of something else -- Headlights finding reflection in his rearview mirror, coming fast. Sam watches as the lights get closer. He looks back to the road -- an approaching curve...

Sam is into the curve when the lights catch him. A black Range Rover moves out to pass, then turns suddenly into Sam's lane, cutting him off.

It happens quickly. Sam swerves to avoid hitting the larger car, but the road affords little margin for error.

The JEEP slides across a narrow shoulder, then plummets down a steep embankment, CRASHING through cattails, rolling over to SLAM BACK DOWN on its tires in a swampy gulch.

Sam slumps back from the steering wheel. Somewhere over his head he can see headlights shining into the trees.

He hears a CAR DOOR SLAM, the SOUNDS of someone scrambling down the embankment.

Sam tries to get out of his seat harness. Someone is approaching, splashing through the muck. Suddenly a hand reaches through the broken driver's window, helping him.

MAN'S VOICE
Are you all right?

The hands get him loose. Sam stumbles from the car.

SAM
Yeah, I'm okay.

He looks up to find -- Frankie Condo, looming over him.

FRANKIE
That's too bad.

He grabs Sam, pulling him OUT OF FRAME. What we are left with is the SOUND of FISTS THUDDING INTO FLESH -- then Sam, hitting the hood of his Jeep, slumping down into the muck.

Frankie is breathing hard. We HEAR him SLOGGING back up the embankment. We HEAR a DOOR SLAM, the RANGE ROVER driving away, leaving only darkness, and the EERIE SOUNDS of the swamp.

EXT. THE STRIP MALL - DAY

Dazzling light. Sam's smashed-up Jeep is parked before Ken Bowden's office, next door to the Mongolian Beef Bowl.

INT. BEEF BOWL - SAME

Sam and Ken eye one another over a green plastic table -- Ken with his neck brace, Sam with a bruised face.

KEN
I figured, you know, it would be darker in here.

He moves a hand to his face.

SAM
Good thinking.

KEN
You can tie whoever did it to Sandra Van Ryan...

SAM
Forget it.

KEN
Lady has some deep pockets. That's all I'm saying.

SAM
I know how deep her pockets are, Ken. I thought I might be able to save my fucking house with an equity loan. Guess who's on the board of directors at the bank?

He pauses to look at Ken Bowden.

SAM (CONT'D)
Can't you take that stupid thing off?

KEN
Not in here. Chiropractor comes in here for lunch sometimes.

Sam sighs, slumps back in his plastic seat.

KEN (CONT'D)
You're not in bad shape, really. I know you think you are, but you're not. Let me tell you why.
(beat)
Sandra Van Ryan.

SAM
What's that supposed to mean?

KEN
For you to be getting this kind of heat, for what they have on you... It doesn't add up. Sandra Van Ryan's got 'em running scared.
(beat)
And I'll tell you something else, you rush, you get careless.

Ken reaches into his briefcase. He pulls out some papers, tosses them on the table. Sam picks one up, starts to read.

SAM
Nellie Gail Ranch...

KEN
Sound nice? It's a fucking drug rehab farm. It's where Kelly Van Ryan went when her mom fished her out of the swamp.
(beat)
Meanwhile, you get educator of the year ... I mean there's no way they can put this thing in front of a jury.
(beat)
Shit, they haven't even taken your statement yet. Reason? They're still shoveling dirt and my guess is, they're coming up empty. Now tell me I'm right.

SAM
There's nothing for them to get.

KEN
Good. So what we're going to do is march right to Hunter's doorstep. We're going to insist they take a statement. We're going to tell them to charge your ass or get off your back.
(beat)
They're walking a fine line here. Defamation of character, malicious prosecution...

SAM
I just want my life back...

KEN
Fair enough. Let's go make a statement.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Everyone's looking a little tired, with the possible exception of Ray. At this moment he sits back in his chair, staring at Sam.

RAY
Why don't you tell us one more time, how Kelly came to be with you, alone in your house.

SAM
(with growing impatience)
Story's the same, Detective...

Ken pats him on the arm. When Sam speaks again, it is in a calmer voice, calm but tired.

SAM (CONT'D)
I had to go look for this coupon.

RAY
The one you bought at school.

SAM
(nodding)
Like I said, I hadn't really expected to use it.
(beat)
Anyway, I'm going through a drawer. I hear a car. I look out the window. I see Nicole driving away. I leave my room, and there's Kelly.

RAY
In cutoffs, a wet T-shirt.

SAM
Ye .

RAY
And she wanted to talk.

SAM
Yes.

RAY
But you can't tell us what she wanted to talk about.

SAM
I could, but it's confidential. Look, the point is, we didn't talk. I told her this was not an appropriate time or place.

RAY
And she began to cry. And you put an arm around her.

SAM
Yes. Mainly to turn her toward the door. I told her we would talk on Monday, in the office.

GLORIA
And when you turned her toward the door, where did you expect her to go, without a car?

SAM
Again. I think we covered this. I told her I was going to call a cab...

RAY
But she ran away.

SAM
That's right.

GLORIA
Did you call anyone? Did you call her house to see if she got home? Did you call the Masons?

SAM
No.

GLORIA
Weren't you a little worried about her...?

SAM
There's a strip mall not half a mile from my house. There's phones there. I cruised the place, but I didn't see her. I figured she was probably there but that she was angry and didn't want to be found. I don't know... Maybe I should have called. But it's not like Kelly can't take care of herself. I figured we'd just take it up on Monday, in the office.

There is a moment of silence in the room.

RAY
But you do admit to touching her, to putting your arm around her. Isn't that against the rules?

SAM
It is and I don't. Ordinarily...
(beat)
But, I mean... there's this kid standing in front of you crying...

RAY
With a thirty-five inch bustline in a wet T-shirt with no bra...

He is cut short as Sam shoves his chair back from the table.

SAM
Fuck you. This is bullshit. I'm outta here.

RAY
Sit down, Lombardo.

Sam and Ray stare at one another. Ken puts a hand on his client's arm.

KEN
All right, all right... Enough.

Ken stands up. He walks to the two-way mirror set in one wall, rapping on the glass with his knuckles.

KEN (CONT'D)
We came down here to make a statement. We've made it.
(beat)
If you're going to charge my client, do it now.

INT. OPPOSITE SIDE MIRROR ROOM - HUNTER

stares at Ken's face, about a foot away. Ken of course can't see him. Hunter gives him the finger.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - KEN

stares into the mirror, waiting.

KEN
I didn't think so.
(to Sam)
Let's go.

Ken opens the door. Sam turns back to Ray and Gloria.

SAM
I've spent the last ten years of my life working with kids. I love what I do, and I think I'm good at it.
(beat)
These kids trust me, and there is no way. No way in hell I would ever betray that trust.

As Ken and Sam leave, Ray and Gloria are joined by Bryce Hunter.

HUNTER
Nice speech. Either of you buying?

Ray shrugs.

RAY
Not that stuff about her running away, him trying to find her. That's bullshit.

HUNTER
What about witnesses?

RAY
We've got three. Guy mowing his yard, couple of kids playing hoops.

HUNTER
And what do they say?

GLORIA
Same as him. They saw her come. They saw her go. They saw him follow.

RAY
Still doesn't explain why he couldn't catch up with her. I mean how long does it take to put on a shirt?

At which point, a COP APPEARS in the doorway.

COP
Phone, Bryce. It's Sandra Van Ryan.

HUNTER
Christ Almighty. That woman's calling me six times a day.

He starts away, then stops.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
I think you're onto something, Ray. Stay with it.

Hunter bangs out of the room. Gloria slumps in a chair, tired, disgusted.

GLORIA
We failed to mention the mower guy's a drunk, that he was after more beer and never really saw Kelly go into the house, so he can't say how long she was in there. Same with the kids. They saw her running down the street, but that's it.
(beat)
With no physical evidence, what do we have? Her word against his.

RAY
You're telling me you believe the guy?

GLORIA
All I'm saying is, we let Sandra Van Ryan push us too hard, we're going to wind up looking stupid.

Ray is saved by his BEEPER. He pulls it off his belt, looks at the number.

RAY
I'd better return this.

Ray leaves. Gloria pulls a cigarette from her purse and lights up, rests her head back in the chair, blowing smoke at the ceiling.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Gloria is grinding out the butt as Ray walks back in. There is something in the way he carries himself, some sense of urgency.

RAY
(off Gloria's look)
Seen any good gator wrestling lately?

EXT./INT. DETECTIVES' CAR - MOVING - DAY

Ray and Gloria drive through the Everglades, past marshlands punctuated by thick stands of melaluca trees.

GLORIA
They say it was old man Van Ryan planted the melalucas to dry up the swamp.

Ray nods.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
You can go up to one of those trees and peel the bark. You know what you get? More bark. And more bark. There's no core. Tree's not good for anything but sucking up water. And now they can't get rid of them. They've tried poisons. Nothing works. They don't die.

RAY
Yeah, well, Van Ryan got his. I don't imagine he gives a shit now.

Gloria just looks at him. Ray stares into the dusty light of an approaching sunset. At last he slows, turning off the highway and onto a narrow dirt road.

A sign pokes out from the tall grass -- "SMILIN' JACK'S FISH CAMP."

The Taurus bounces along the washboard road.

GLORIA
You're sure we're not lost?

They are driving now at the edge of a canal.

RAY
You remember that little girl walked out of our talk at Blue Bay?

GLORIA
The skinny brunette.

RAY
This is where she lives. She wants to talk.
(beat)
Beats the shit out of me why she would call me at all. I busted her once for possession. She wound up doing about six months at Camp Nine.

GLORIA
You mean Camp Sixty-Nine.

Ray gives her a look. Gloria shrugs.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
That's what they called it when I was in Juvenile. It's a pretty dismal place.

RAY
It's a shithole. But she was dirty, what was I gonna do?

They pass a sagging chain-link fence, entering a quarter-mile run of shabby trailers and cheap shacks.

The squalor of the buildings is seat in contrast to the beauty of the Glades where the waters have gone to the color of polished brass beneath an immense, darkening sky.

Ray parks before a ramshackle building covered in vines and peeling paint. A sign reads: "NIGHT CRAWLERS $1 A BUCKET." The jawbones of numerous gators hang beneath the eaves.

As they get out of the car, something catches Gloria's eye -- along the bank of the canal...

ANGLE ON BANK

where a tall man (WALTER) with long white hair and tattooed arms kneels inside a pen, slapping a huge gator on its snout. The reptile lifts its upper body, hissing, opening its jaws.

Walter takes a stick from his hip pocket, passing it through the gator's mouth. The jaws snap shut, incredibly fast, with a hollow snapping sound.

Gloria jumps instinctively, then watches, aghast, as Walter slaps the creature once more. This time moving round to the front of the gator, sticking half his arm inside its mouth.

VOICE (O.S.)
He's jus' showin' off for you now.

Gloria starts, then turns to find a woman (RUBY) has walked up beside her. The woman is in her sixties. She's dressed in polyester. Her hair is piled on top of her head -- too dark to be anything but a dye job. A cigarette bobs from her lips.

Before Gloria can respond, Ray steps up behind them.

RAY
Evening Ruby.
(beat)
I see you still got Walter. I was sort of hoping something had eaten him by now.

RUBY
(a long beat)
Can I help you with something?

Ray and the old lady look at each other.

RAY
Suzie called. You know where we can find her?

Ruby looks toward the store.

RUBY
You know the way.

She watches as the detectives CROSS the road, then calls to them as they start up the steps.

RUBY (CONT'D)
You won't shoot her will you? I don't believe she's armed.

Gloria turns, surprised. Ray gives the woman a long, cold stare, then opens the door for Gloria.

INT. CAMP STORE - SAME

It's dark inside. The main light source is a tiny, beat-up black-and-white TV.

Two elderly women in colored bouffant hairdos sit on a ratty old couch watching reruns of "Family Feud." They look up as Ray and Gloria ENTER then EXIT through a door in the back.

INT. SUZIE'S ROOM - SAME

Black walls. Cheap bookshelves, filled to overflowing. A wire strung with dismembered doll parts runs the length of the room.

Suzie is propped on a ratty futon, an open book on her stomach, her thin, white arms crossed behind her head.

SUZIE
Jesus. It took you long enough. What if somebody was trying to strangle me? Or fuck me in the ass, even?
(beat)
I mean, you guys are Sex Crimes.

Ray manages a thin smile.

RAY
Meet my partner, Gloria Perez.

SUZIE
I did. At Blue Balls.

GLORIA
Seems to me you left early, before we could meet. But hi, Suzie.

Gloria puts out a hand. Suzie looks at it, puts out a hand of her own.

As the women shake, Gloria looks at the book on Suzie's stomach, turning her head as if to read the title.

SUZIE
It's Celine. He's okay. He had a pretty good line on what cheap fucks people are.

RAY
So Suzie, you called us, remember?

Suzie takes a cigarette from a pack at her side, lights up, blows smoke at the ceiling.

SUZIE
Did they arrest Mr. Lombardo?

Ray and Gloria exchange looks.

RAY
No.

SUZIE
Will they?

RAY
It doesn't look like it.

SUZIE
Then he'll be back at Blue Balls?

Ray shrugs.

GLORIA
That bothers you?

SUZIE
(a long beat)
Yeah, maybe, a little.

GLORIA
Why is that?

Suzie lets out her breath. She rests her head against the wall.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
You can talk to us, Suzie. That's why we're here...

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Suzie, Gloria and Hunter sit at the conference table. Ray operates the video cam.

GLORIA
Okay, Suzie. We want you to tell us about the day Mr. Lombardo gave you and Jimmy a ride.

Suzie stares at the three cops around her, then at the camera.

SUZIE
You didn't tell me you were gonna put me on the fucking news.

GLORIA
We need to tape the interview Suzie. No one will see it but us.
(beat)
Now when was this, that Mr. Lombardo gave you the ride?

Suzie stares at the camera. She's lost the cockiness she had on her own turf. She looks small, white and frail in the sterile room, surrounded by the detectives.

SUZIE
About a year ago.

GLORIA
He dropped Jimmy off first?

SUZIE
Yeah.

GLORIA
And when he arrived at your house, was anyone there?

SUZIE
No.

GLORIA
So you were alone.

SUZIE
Yes.

GLORIA
Did he come in with you?

SUZIE
I guess.

HUNTER
You guess? Did he or didn't he?

SUZIE
Yeah... okay... he did.

HUNTER
And then what... he touched you? Did you maybe flirt a little...

SUZIE
I wanna go home now.

Gloria glares at Hunter, shakes her head.

GLORIA
Suzie, look, I know you feel bad. I know it's harder to talk here than in your room, but we need to get it on tape.
(beat)
Just tell us what you told us before. Tell us the truth.

Suzie huddles in her skinny arms, studying the detectives.

SUZIE
I didn't say a thing to him. He just put his arm around me. Told me I was pretty... I could be really pretty, he said.

Another moment -- she looks at Ray, then at Hunter.

HUNTER
What did you do then?

SUZIE
(a long beat)
Shit, what difference does it make... Nobody's gonna believe me anyway...

HUNTER
Suzie! Did this man rape you?

SUZIE
Okay! He did. He pushed me to the floor and he did it to me. Now, can I go home?

She stands up.

GLORIA
At that point were you able to fight him off?

SUZIE
No. He stopped by himself. Okay? That's all. Let me go.

Gloria gets to her feet as well; she tries to put an arm around Suzie. The girl jumps back as if she has been shocked.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
Don't touch me.

Gloria's hands fall to her sides.

Suzie heads for the door.

The detectives exchange looks.

At which point, Suzie stops, turns to face the room.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
He did say something.

GLORIA
What was that?

SUZIE
He said, "No little bitch can ever make me come."

THE SLIDING BAR DOOR

of a jail SLAMS shut on Sam Lombardo. He turns to...

TWO menacing PRISONERS.

PRISONER
So you're the new chicken licker.

CUT TO:

COURT TV IMAGE

The graphic -- "Prime Time Justice" -- then the anchor -- CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA (TV)
Today from Superior Court in Miami, Florida -- Dade County versus Samuel J. Lombardo.

PULL BACK to REVEAL...

INT. ART'S OFFICE, BLUE BAY HIGH - DAY

Art, students, faculty members huddle around the TV.

CYNTHIA (TV, CONT'D)
The Lombardo rape case has galvanized the upscale town of Blue Bay...

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Video crews surround a limo as Sandra and Kelly EMERGE.

CYNTHIA (V.O., CONT'D)
... with its tabloid appeal -- Sandra Van Ryan -- jet-set real estate heiress...

Tom Baxter and Barbara jostle up the steps.

CYNTHIA (V.O., CONT'D)
The powerful Blue Bay elite...

Suzie, in the company of Ruby and Walter, pushes past the video crews.

CYNTHIA (V.O., CONT'D)
... the girl from the wrong side of the tracks...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Bryce Hunter confers with his team.

Ken in his neck brace, ENTERS with Sam and a bailiff. Sam wears a suit. He's clean-shaven, recovered from the car wreck and beating. Still, there is a weariness about him we have not seen before. He makes eye contact with Sandra -- a cold stare.

CYNTHIA (V.O., CONT'D)
In the end, the prosecution's case will come down to...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Hunter in front of the jury.

HUNTER
... what happened to Kelly Lanier Van Ryan and Susan Marie Toller that will forever change the lives of these two young women? What happened in those fifteen minutes alone with Samuel Lombardo?

CLOSE ON SAM

The dark, seductive eyes.

INT. COURTHOUSE - WITNESS WAITING ROOM - DAY

Suzie, nervous, paces the floor, stops, lights a cigarette.

The other witnesses sit in chairs along the wall -- the lawn mower man, cul-de-sac kids, Barbara, Nicole, as...

IN THE COURTROOM

Kelly Van Ryan sits in the witness box, dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief while Bryce Hunter stands before her. The room is silent, the spectators riveted on the scene.

HUNTER
Do you need more time?

Kelly shakes her head, no.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
I know this is hard, Kelly, but I have just one more question and even though its something we've been over, I want us all to be very clear about it.
(a long beat)
When you made the decision to stay at Mr. Lombardo's house, after he had offered you a ride. When you saw that he intended to have sex with you, what were your exact words? What did you say?

KELLY
I told him, no. I said stop, Mr. Lombardo, please... I screamed for him to stop...

HUNTER
And did he?

Kelly looks defiantly at the courtroom.

KELLY
No. He raped me on the floor of his shitty house.

CUT TO:

WITNESS WAITING ROOM - SAME - SUZIE

still pacing, as Ray and Gloria ENTER the room.

Suzie shoots them a nervous glance, drops her cigarette, bends to pick it up, burns her fingers, drops it again. She curses beneath her breath, wrapping her fingers about her shoulders.

Ray and Gloria watch her, exchange glances. Gloria picks up Suzie's cigarette for her, puts it out in an ashtray.

GLORIA
You've got nothing to be scared of, Suzie, just take a deep breath.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

PANNING the spectators, we SEE Sandra, Baxter, Ray, Gloria.

Hunter is on the witness stand.

Suzie is in the box. She looks pale, even more nervous.

SUZIE
He pushed into me... I couldn't stop him... it hurt.

HUNTER
I'm sorry... you said it hurt? Why?

SUZIE
Because... it was the biggest I've ever seen. And I've seen a lot on their way through Jack's Fish Camp.

Chuckling in the courtroom. The JUDGE glares, silencing it.

HUNTER
Ms. Toller, did Samuel Lombardo rape you in your family's home on the 23rd of April last year?

Suzie glances at Sam, hesitates.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
Ms. Toller?

SUZIE
I said he did.

HUNTER
Ms. Toller. I'm asking you now, under oath, did Samuel Lombardo rape you?

Suzie looks around, as if for help. The spectators stir.

Ray rubs his eyes. Gloria's are closed.

SUZIE
This wasn't my idea.

HUNTER
I'm sorry?

Suzie looks at Sam once more.

SUZIE
Look. I just don't want to get into any more trouble...

Tom Baxter rises to his feet. The Judge raises a hand, motioning him to sit back down.

JUDGE
(to Baxter)
The Court would like to hear what Miss Toller has to say.
(to Suzie)
Miss Toller.

SUZIE
Mr. Lombardo didn't rape me. He didn't rape Kelly either. He didn't do anything.

QUICK CUTS

Hunter slumps back against the prosecution table.

Sandra's hand covers her mouth. Baxter mumbles a curse.

Sam hangs his head in relief. Ken grins above his neck brace.

COURTROOM LOBBY

The press corps scrambles for cameras.

BLUE BAY HIGH

Teachers, students, Art, Jimmy -- jammed around the TV.

JIMMY
I don't believe it...

IN THE COURTROOM

Bryce Hunter and Tom Baxter are both on their feet, trying to make themselves heard above the din.

HUNTER
Your Honor... I must object...

JUDGE
(hammering for order)
I think I made it plain that the Court intends to hear Miss Toller's story.

The Judge turns a cold eye on Suzie.

SUZIE
I'm sorry.

JUDGE
Sorry? Just how far did you intend to let this go?

SUZIE
I don't know. I just wanted to hurt Mr. Lombardo.

Sam looks up, confused.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
He was my friend at first. Then I got busted... he didn't even stick up for me. I had to go away to that hellhole. It's like, you're his favorite, then who cares? You wanna know something? When Kelly said we should do this, I thought cool, all these big shots screwing me over, like that cop, Duquette. Now they're gonna get screwed.

HUNTER
Your Honor... Please...

JUDGE
Any more interruptions Mr. Hunter, and the Court will hold you in contempt.
(to Suzie)
What you are telling me, Ms. Toller, is that Kelly Van Ryan is responsible for conceiving this entire charade...

SUZIE
Kelly's pissed at Mr. Lombardo, too. She's in love with him. I mean her whole fantasy is him since her old man died. Then she found out that Mr. Lombardo was doing her mom. I mean that was it...

Gasps in the court as --

Kelly BURSTS from the witness waiting room, trailed by a bailiff.

KELLY
You stupid little bitch...

She grabs the first thing she can get her hands on -- a glass of water from one of the tables and hurls it toward the witness stand before the bailiff can pin her arms against her sides.

INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - LATER

A mob scene. Video crews are herded to one side by bailiffs as Sandra and Baxter, with Kelly in tow, move toward a side door.

Sam and Ken round a corner, followed by Ray and Gloria who walk on either side of Suzie.

Kelly sees them. She makes a run at Suzie. For a moment the girls shove and kick but Ray and Gloria are between them in a hurry, pulling them apart as Baxter arrives to take charge of Kelly, pulling her toward the door.

Ruby and Walter arrive now too. Suzie runs to them and they lead her through the crowd, Walter pushing people aside with his long, tattooed arms.

Gloria heaves a sigh. Ray pushes a hand through his hair, then turns to find Sam looking at him. Most of the press have run off to follow the girls -- looking for more action. It is a quiet moment. The two men lock eyes.

SAM
I've found that adolescents make the best liars. They're old enough to be good at it, but you want like hell to believe them, because they're still children.

Ray just looks at him -- a hard stare.

EXT./INT. KEN'S T-BIRD - DAY

top down, speeds on a highway, banana palms on one side, the blue Atlantic on the other.

Wind buffets Ken and Sam -- who has a dazed look.

KEN
(hyped)
Come on, let loose!

SAM
I was just thinking about where I'm gonna stay. I lost the house. It's like waking up from a goddamn nightmare.

KEN
You'll get over it. We've got a knockdown, airtight, motherfucker of a lawsuit against Sandra Van Ryan.

SAM
Just like that?

KEN
Just like that? These people ruined your life, bro.

Ken pauses to thump the wheel with the butt of his hand.

KEN (CONT'D)
I told you they were going overboard and they did... They'll settle. Believe me. They'll be begging to settle...

At which point Ken spots something up ahead. His smile broadens. He swerves into the other lane, tooting his horn, waving, as...

The T-bird draws even with a sleek black limo.

SAM
You don't think you're overdoing it?

He pulls off his neck brace, dangles it in front of Sam's face, then tosses it out the window.

INT. LIMO - MOVING - SAME

Tom Baxter watches as the T-bird rockets off into the distance, a white piece of foam rubber bouncing across the road in its wake.

A console TV is on -- news of the courthouse chaos.

Sandra is next to Baxter. Kelly is on the opposite bench seat.

SANDRA
I hope you're going to nail his scrotum to the nearest wall.

BAXTER
That might have been a possibility, if little miss not-so-bright here hadn't started throwing things.

KELLY
Fuck off.

Sandra lunges to slap Kelly. Baxter stops it in midair.

BAXTER
See what I mean...

SANDRA
You're going to let them get away with this... this shit? On the word of one little white trash bitch...

BAXTER
You like seeing your name in the papers?

Sandra glares at him.

BAXTER (CONT'D)
Leave town, Sandy. Go to your place in St. Barts. Let things cool down.

Sandra concentrates on the TV.

BAXTER (CONT'D)
They'll try for twenty million. The cheaper the lawyer, the higher the demand.

SANDRA
You've got to be kidding.

BAXTER
The man's life has been destroyed. There will always be doubters, no matter what happened in court.

SANDRA
I'm not paying any idiot twenty million dollars.

BAXTER
I said that's what they'd ask for.

Sandra stares from the window. At last she turns to Kelly.

SANDRA
I hope you're happy.

Kelly seems to give this a moment's thought, then, smiling.

KELLY
Ecstatic.

EXT. EVERGLADES - DAY

Sam cruises slowly across the water in his junked-out air boat. He kills the engine, allowing the craft to glide to a stop.

He's close to where he found the big gator -- the same shabby collection of whitewashed buildings we now RECOGNIZE as the Glades Motel, shimmers in the distance.

Sam leans back, enjoying the silence. He reaches into a cooler, takes out a beer, opens it, takes a drink, then pulls something else from the cooler --

-- a bundle of white butcher's paper. Sam opens the paper, takes out raw meat -- something disgusting to look at -- big red turkey necks, maybe, which he tosses into the water.

ANGLE ON WATER

as the meat drifts down -- then, a sudden boiling, as -- quick as the strike of a snake -- the huge gator EMERGES, jaws wide, to snap up the morsel before slipping beneath the surface once more.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Ken's Secretary opens the inner office door for Baxter.

Ken rises from a desk to greet him.

KEN
Tom Baxter. Good to see you again.

BAXTER
Let's cut the crap. What does your client want?

KEN
Besides an apology?

BAXTER
Unless you're planning on leaving Blue Bay, there's gonna be other cases, other days... You might want to keep that in mind.

KEN
Okay Tom. My client wants your client to saddle up... so we can ride her ass all the way to the bank.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DAY

A hot morning in June. Shadows angle across the campus.

Students line up at the old wooden pagoda, picking up caps and gowns. A few turn, surprised to see...

SAM LOMBARDO cross the parking lot, ENTERS a building.

INT. ART'S OFFICE - ART

working at his desk. Sam's terrarium is behind him, his "Educator of the Year" Waterford bowl, a storage box of files.

Art looks up at a KNOCK on the DOOR. Sam walks into the room. It is a slightly awkward moment.

SAM
Lizards don't seem to miss me.

The two men smile, breaking the tension.

SAM (CONT'D)
How you doing, Artie?

ART
I... You know... I...

Sam waves him off.

SAM
Take care of my lizards, Art.

Art stands up. The two men shake hands.

OUTSIDE GUIDANCE OFFICE

Sam comes out, then stops suddenly.

Kelly waits for him. Kirk and Nicole are with her. A long moment.

SAM
Kelly...

KELLY
Drop dead... You know where my mom is trying to get the money to pay you off? She's trying to break my trust. How do you like that? I can't touch it until she's dead and she won't give me a dime and now she's trying to break it to pay you...

SAM
Look, Kelly... I'm sorry... I know what you've been through... I should've seen something like this coming.

Art APPEARS in the door behind Sam. Kelly comes closer.

KELLY
Why don't you start fucking her again. You can spend it together.

Kirk tries to take Kelly's arm. She jerks away, swings at Sam.

He ducks, dropping the Waterford BOWL, which SHATTERS upon the floor.

Kirk bear-hugs Kelly. She throws a notebook at Sam.

KELLY (CONT'D)
I hate you!

She starts crying. Kirk and Nicole drag her away as a crowd gathers.

Sam, shaken, kneels over the broken crystal. Art bends to help him pick up the pieces.

SAM
You see. I couldn't stay, even if I wanted to.

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT

Sam's Jeep is parked next to the T-bird and Jaguar.

INT. KEN'S OFFICE - SAME

Baxter, Ken, Sandra, Frankie stand watching, as Sam signs papers. At last Sam looks up, faces Sandra -- not a happy moment.

Sandra gives him a long, hard stare, then walks from the room.

Frankie prepares to follow her, then stops, looks at Sam.

FRANKIE
I'll be seeing you.

Sam just looks at him. The big man leaves. Baxter closes his briefcase.

KEN
So long, Tom. Come by sometime. We'll have lunch at the Beef Bowl.

Baxter stops, gives him a cold look, then a surprising smile.

BAXTER
I don't think you're gonna be eating at the Beef Bowl anymore, kid.

He EXITS. Ken goes apeshit -- whoops, dances around the desk, drops into his chair, holds up the documents.

Sam watches, smiling, finally.

SAM
Thanks Ken, you did okay.

Both men stand, they shake hands. Ken claps him on the arm.

KEN
(no clowning now)
Look, I know there's a part of you wishes none of this had happened. But it did. Now take the money and get out of here. Find a happy place.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EVERGLADES - NIGHT

Moonlit fog -- the vast swamp.

EXT. GLADES MOTEL - NIGHT

It's late. A neon palm tree flashes across an empty lot as...

Sam's Jeep pulls in out of the night, parks before its bungalow. Sam gets out, lifts his storage box of files from the rear.

INT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The neon's green light slashes across the dark walls through old Venetian blinds.

Sam ENTERS, puts the file box on the floor. Arches a sore back.

He reaches for a bedside lamp, stops, listens, decides it's nothing, reaches again for the lamp, stops again, listening...

BZZZZZ -- the high-pitched WHINE of a MOSQUITO. Then more -- a flurry of BZZZZZZZZS.

Sam frowns, sees...

A cloud of mosquitoes circling him.

He checks the front windows -- closed. He goes around the bed. The slightly ajar bathroom door with full-length mirror comes up on his right. Ahead is a rear window -- wide open.

Sam stops fast. Thinks. Lets out a breath.

SAM
Damn maid.

He steps to the window. He looks down --

Muddy footprints.

Sam freezes. He whirls around --

A sudden green FACE APPEARS in the big mirror -- like a nightmare image -- lit by the neon flash, then DISAPPEARS.

Sam jumps back.

SAM
Ahhhh!

The neon green face flashes again in the mirror -- DISAPPEARS. Now the bathroom door slowly opens all the way.

Sam backs up, hits the wall.

Kelly Van Ryan steps out of the bathroom, a long object held at her side, wrapped in a towel.

SAM
Jesus Christ, what are you doing?

KELLY
So you got my mom's money.

Sam tries to breathe, manages a nod.

KELLY (CONT'D)
How much?

Kelly prods him with the concealed object.

KELLY (CONT'D)
How much?

SAM
About six and a half million dollars.

Kelly raises the object covered by the towel, aims it at Sam.

KELLY
Your turn to pay.

A moment -- then she yanks the towel away to REVEAL --

-- a two-foot-long novelty penis with giant balls. Her hand grips the acrylic scrotum like the butt of a gun.

KELLY (CONT'D)
King Dong! That's you, Sam!

She screams with joy, vaults into his arms, wraps those perfect thighs around him. The dildo goes flying. They fall on the bed.

KELLY (CONT'D)
It worked! We screwed the bitch!

She's all over him now -- tongue kisses.

KELLY (CONT'D)
It worked just like you said it would.

He kisses her, finally gets her to sit, straddling him.

SAM
God, you scared the shit out of me. You must be crazy coming here.

KELLY
Of course I'm crazy. Ask my mom.

She kisses him again, more passionately now. He gets into it, tears her blouse open, putting his tongue to her breasts.

A SHADOW moves on the wall, looming above them. Sam sees it, his eyes widen. He tries to sit up, as...

BANG! -- an EXPLOSION. Sam jumps, knocks Kelly to his side.

A champagne cork hits the ceiling.

Suzie Toller stands over the bed with a foaming champagne bottle.

SUZIE
How much is about six and a half million divided by three?

SAM
Jesus. Two million one hundred thirty-three thousand three hundred thirty-three and change.

Kelly screams in joy again.

SAM
Now calm down. Both of you.

The girls put on mock serious expressions.

SAM (CONT'D)
From now on, if we're seen together, it's got to be accidental. I thought that was understood...

KELLY
Hey, come on... We've got to have at least one victory party.

Kelly grabs the champagne, takes a long gulp, pours some on her breasts as she straddles Sam once more, inviting him to lick them clean.

SAM
Kelly, for christ's sake...

She has begun to move like a lap dancer, inviting him to take her breasts in his mouth, putting a hand to his crotch...

SAM (CONT'D)
The only way we're gonna blow this now, is if we do it ourselves...

KELLY
(her hand in his crotch)
Do it to ourselves?

SAM
(weakening)
We have to stick with the plan.

KELLY
Stick?

Sam gives up, lays back as Kelly undoes his pants, then moves to get him inside her.

Suzie watches. She takes another drink, then tosses the bottle, pulling off her top, REVEALING her small, white breasts, a couple of tattoos, a pierced nipple. She slips behind Kelly, fondling Kelly's breasts as Sam arches beneath them both -- all of them totally into it now, losing themselves in the sex...

FADE TO:

INT. DETECTIVES' ROOM, BLUE BAY POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The room is dark and empty, with the exception of a single desk lamp, by which halo we find...

Ray Duquette, in an aloha shirt, waiting as his computer's printer finishes a job, as suddenly...

... a new light rushes into the room. Ray turns to find Gloria standing in the doorway. He stops as his printer finishes the job. He pulls out the paper, looks at it, smiles. Gloria walks to his desk.

RAY
You saw the news today?

GLORIA
Lombardo's settlement?

Ray nods.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Yeah, well, I told you they were gonna make us look stupid.

Ray gives her a long look. Gloria waits a moment, shrugs.

RAY
Hey, don't back away from it, you were right. We did look stupid.
(beat)
What you were wrong about, is who made us look that way.

Gloria just looks at him, puzzled.

RAY (CONT'D)
Think back, before the suit was filed, before the trial. Lombardo had an affair with Sandra, right?
(Gloria nods)
So why not tell us about the affair? I mean it could be a hell of a motive for Kelly to fabricate her charge in the first place.

GLORIA
Maybe Lombardo's attorney was saving the affair for the trial.

RAY
I thought of that. Then I said, come on, you're Lombardo. Your reputation is getting trashed. You want to stop the bleeding. You don't want to sit in jail for three months. Unless...

GLORIA
Unless what?

RAY
Unless you're setting up Sandra Van Ryan for the big payday.

It is quiet in the office, save for the soft BUZZ of Ray's COMPUTER.

RAY (CONT'D)
They chumped us, Gloria, right from the start.

GLORIA
Why? You ask me, Lombardo had it pretty good already, nice job in a beautiful setting, popular, an active social life.
(beat)
He's gonna put this all on the line for some dicey play like what you're describing...

RAY
(interrupting)
The job looks okay to us. But look at it from his point of view. The man's surrounded by wealth and privilege. But for him... it's just a reminder of what should have been his.

Gloria gives this a moment's thought.

RAY (CONT'D)
Your old man graduates from Blue Bay School, you're not supposed to wind up there. Board of Directors maybe, but not in the lousy guidance office. Now. Point number two.
(he taps at the printout on his desk)
I've run a financial on Lombardo. Guy was eyeball-deep in debt before this all happened -- trying to keep up with pricey trim like Barbara Baxter.

He passes the printout to Gloria. She looks at it, thinking.

GLORIA
So what about the girls? Suzie's poor, but why would Kelly have to steal from her own mother? Surely her father...

RAY
(interrupting)
Her father didn't leave her squat. The kid's got money in trust from her grandfather, but she can't touch that till her mother dies and Sandra seems to have the idea that Kelly ought to learn the value of a buck.

Gloria looks over Lombardo's financial once more, tosses it on the desk, then studies Ray -- long beat.

GLORIA
This one's got you working overtime, hasn't it?

RAY
I flat don't like the guy, Glory. He's dirty. And I'll tell you something else. You want to know how old man Lombardo lost his money?
(beat)
He was fucked out of it by old man Van Ryan, on a little item known as the Salt Creek Land Deal.
(beat)
It was after the war. Van Ryan set up a corporation to develop swamp land, got investors like Lombardo to put up money, then turned around and got the state to declare the area an ecological preserve, on the sly, of course, but everyone knew it was him. The freeway went to the coast, right where Van Ryan wanted it.

GLORIA
Eliminate the competition.

RAY
You got it. The rich got richer. While the saps like Lombardo went belly-up in the swamp.

Gloria looks at him a long moment.

GLORIA
Where'd you come up with this stuff, anyway?

RAY
(a long beat; then beneath a smile)
I met a guy in a bar.

EXT. A BANK, BLUE BAY - DAY

Sam walks down the steps, gets into his Jeep, and drives away.

Across the street -- the white Taurus -- Ray and Gloria watch.

EXT. YACHT BROKERAGE - DAY

Sam comes out, rounds a corner and is gone.

Ray Duquette steps INTO FRAME, turns into the brokerage. The door swings shut behind him.

INT. SWIMMING POOL, BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DAY

Girls in tank suits finish laps, towel off. As the girls begin to walk toward the lockers, they encounter...

Ray Duquette, threading his way among the girls, his eye on...

Kelly, alone on the deck, still dripping -- a Botticelli vision.

RAY (O.S.)
Nice stroke.

Kelly, startled, turns to find Ray walking toward her across the deck. She snatches a towel from one of the racing platforms and begins to dry herself, wrapping the towel around her.

KELLY
Is there some reason why you're here?

RAY
Curiosity, I guess.

KELLY
About what? How to improve your breast stroke?

Ray gives her a cold smile.

RAY
Actually, I was curious about how you see things working out, for you, Sam and Suzie.

This appears to give her pause, a moment of hesitation.

KELLY
Excuse me?

RAY
You all gonna go down to the Caribbean together?

Kelly looks around the pool area. A number of girls are watching from a corner of the deck, but no one is close enough to hear.

RAY (CONT'D)
The thing about it is, threesomes so rarely work out.

KELLY
You're out of your mind.

RAY
I've been a cop for a while, Kelly.
(beat)
It's hard enough for one person to keep a secret, let alone three. And then there's the love angle. I mean do you and Sam really want that little pill-head around, now that you have the money?

Kelly starts to walk away. Ray cuts her off.

RAY (CONT'D)
Am I right, did Sam sell you on the idea right up front, of whacking Suzie? That's murder, Kelly.

KELLY
Police -- God -- get a life.

She moves around him and walks calmly away.

RAY
(loud enough to make himself heard)
You're good. But you don't think that little ditz Suzie's gonna hold together, do you?

Kelly continues to walk, her face giving nothing away, as Ray's WORDS ECHO over the pool.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL PARKING LOT - LONG SHOT - LATER

Only a few cars left -- one of them Suzie's old VW bug, at the side of which Kelly and Suzie engage in heated conversation.

CLOSER - SUZIE

paces around Kelly.

SUZIE
You don't know Duquette. I'm the one he busted... He's a fucker, man... He'll fuck us both over...

Kelly tries to take her by the arm. Suzie jerks away.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
I'm not going back to that prison. That's what it was... a fucking hell hole...

Kelly looks around the lot. She takes Suzie by the arm once more, this time more firmly, pulling Suzie to her.

KELLY
Will you calm down. Duquette's gonna come to you just like he did to me. You're gonna have to be ready for him.

SUZIE
Yeah, but he can't push you around like he can me. You've got family and they've got clout. With me it's different... with me...

KELLY
(circling her with her arm)
Yeah, I've got family and they've got clout and now you have me. Right? And Sam. Believe me, Suzie, this dickhead's not going to send you anywhere. He's gonna try and rattle your cage, and that's it. Stay strong and he can't do shit.

SUZIE
(a long beat)
Man, I wanna smoke a joint.

PULL BACK to REVEAL -- in the distance -- the white Ford Taurus at the side of the road leading to the school.

The car is pulled just far enough off the road to be mostly hidden among pampas grass and oleander, but angled in such a way as to afford a view of the two girls now hugging in the lot.

EXT. SMILIN' JACK'S FISH CAMP - NIGHT

Suzie wanders along the canal, smoking a joint. At her back a few faint lights flicker here and there in the windows of trailers. She walks down to the little dock, sits on a rail, takes another hit.

VOICE (O.S.)
'Evening, Suzie. How was school today?

Suzie freezes, holds back her exhale, looking around...

A shadow stirs in one of the skiffs tied to the dock. A man stands, walks up the couple of wooden stairs. The light from a trailer across the road glances off steel- rimmed glasses as Ray Duquette steps onto the dock.

Suzie gags on the smoke in her lungs, coughs. She squeezes the lit roach into her palm, then tosses it into the canal.

RAY
You ought to watch it with that shit, Suzie. You get busted again, you go back in a two-time loser.

SUZIE
You got something against cigarettes?

Ray just laughs at her.

RAY
Yeah, they're bad for your health.
(beat)
I'm tryin' to look out for you...

SUZIE
That's cop bullshit.

RAY
Well, you're half right. Best thing you could do for yourself right now would be to talk to me.

SUZIE
About what?

RAY
Every triangle I've ever seen never lasts. Somebody's got to go.

SUZIE
Is this supposed to mean something to me? What triangle?

RAY
You, Kelly, Sam.

SUZIE
I don't have to listen to this. And you can't shove me around. I have friends now...

She catches herself, falters.

Ray laughs once more.

RAY
Is that what you think? You have friends? Is that what they told you?

SUZIE
I don't mean who you're thinking. I have other friends...

RAY
Suzie, Suzie... This is me, Ray, you're talking to. We both know you don't have shit, never have had shit, never will have shit...

He takes a sheet of paper from his coat.

RAY (CONT'D)
Here, Suzie. I want you to look this over. Know what it is?
(as Suzie takes it)
Sam deposited his check, transferred the funds to an offshore bank, a numbered account. Not even the cops can find out whose names are on it. Think one of them's yours?

Suzie looks over the paper.

RAY (CONT'D)
He also put a down on some island property, and a lease-to-buy on a forty-foot sailboat. You're into sailing, aren't you, Suzie?

Suzie thrusts the paper back at Ray.

SUZIE
Get away from me.

RAY
Don't you see what this means? You really think Sam and Kelly are gonna give you a third of the money? You, the pill-head with the rap sheet?

SUZIE
Shut up.

Ray smiles at her. He moves up close.

RAY
You know, I don't think I ever told you I was sorry about your little friend... What was his name?

Suzie tries to back away. She bumps against the rail. Ray reaches out, takes her hand in both of his.

RAY (CONT'D)
Come on, Suzie, help me out here. You know his name.

Suzie looks scared, in a way she hasn't before. When she speaks her voice is scarcely above a whisper.

SUZIE
Davy.

RAY
(nodding, a scary smile)
That's right. That was his name.

The smile fades, as if he's thinking about something, still holding her hand, rubbing it with his fingers.

RAY (CONT'D)
Sometimes I wonder if you're really as dumb as you pretend to be.

He looks into Suzie's eyes, slowly opening her hand to REVEAL the burn mark on her palm.

RAY (CONT'D)
But you know what? I'd be keeping a clear mind right now if I were you.
(beat)
I'd hate to see you come to a bad end. Like Davy did.

He holds her hand a moment longer, then drops it. He goes back down the steps to the little skiff. An outboard MOTOR STARTS in the night.

INT. SUZIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Suzie comes in fast, grabs the phone, punches out a number.

SAM (V.O.)
(answering machine)
This is Sam. I'm not in right now...

EXT./INT. RAY'S PICKUP - NIGHT

parked behind some cottonwoods in a small launch area where the highway crosses both the canal and the road to the fish camp.

The skiff has been shoved into the bed. Ray sits at the wheel. He removes his glasses, wipes his face with a handkerchief, then starts at the uneven SOUNDS of a tired ENGINE, looks up to see...

HEADLIGHTS

Suzie's VW bouncing along the dirt road, turning onto the highway.

RAY'S TRUCK - RAY

watching, then starting his truck and pulling out onto the highway, following the tiny red lights of Suzie's bug.

EXT. VAN RYAN ESTATE - MAIN GATE - NIGHT

Suzie's VW idles. She leans out the window, talks to the intercom, the gate opens. The VW ENTERS. The gate closes.

Ray's pickup drives past. He drives to a big lot where one of the mansions has been torn down. He drives up onto the dirt, keeps going, right down to the water's edge where he pulls his little skiff out of the back once more.

He walks back to the truck, pulls off his sport coat, hangs a Hi-8 video camera over his shoulder and wades out into the calm waters of the bay, pushing the skiff, then climbing in.

EXT. VAN RYAN ESTATE, REAR OF MAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Suzie follows Kelly past the pool, which is all lit up, and on toward the jacuzzi. The whole deck is tiled in black- and-white.

Kelly's in a bikini -- the killer body. Suzie, the contrast -- pale, skinny, boyish, in a T-shirt and cutoff jeans. They argue -- we CANNOT HEAR.

EXT. THE BAY - SAME

Ray has arrived near the docks. He has killed his engine, maneuvering here with a single oar. He ties the skiff off behind the Jonathan, then climbs to the dock, moving around the guest house and coming close to the pool. He takes a position behind the cabanas, readies his camera.

EXT. POOL AREA - SAME

Kelly and Suzie continue their argument in front of the jacuzzi.

KELLY
I can't believe you called Sam. What's the matter with you?

SUZIE
I'm scared, that's what. I'm scared there's no one to trust.

KELLY
You can trust me.

A cordless PHONE RINGS on the patio chair. Kelly and Suzie are startled by it. Kelly answers.

INT. SAM'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The bedside lamp is on. Sam is on the phone.

SAM
Kelly. Is Suzie there?

KELLY (V.O.)
Yes.

SAM
Shit. I was afraid of that. She left this garbled message on my machine.
(beat)
Can you calm her down?

KELLY (V.O.)
Why can't you come...

SAM
No! Christ. Listen, Kelly, I'm counting on you. You calm her down.
(MORE)

SAM
I mean do whatever you have to, whatever it takes...

KELLY
You know what it takes.

SAM
Then do it. I need you on this Kelly. Do it tonight. We'll figure something out... Okay?

EXT. JACUZZI - NIGHT

Kelly glances across the steamy water at Suzie.

KELLY
Yeah, right. Can you at least talk to her, on the phone?

INT. SAM'S BUNGALOW - SAME

Sam lies on his bed, waits for Suzie's voice on the line.

SUZIE (V.O.)
Sam...

SAM
Put Kelly on too.

EXT. JACUZZI - SAME

The girls stand cheek-to-cheek, the phone between them.

KELLY
I'm here.

INT. SAM'S BUNGALOW - SAME

SAM
Okay. I want you to hear this too. We've got to be cool. All of us. People think I'm rich, for Christ's sake. I'm doing what rich guys do.
(beat)
I'm spending my money. It's more suspicious if I sit around doing nothing. Now don't let this cop fuck with your minds.

EXT. CABANAS - NIGHT

Ray tapes the scene.

The girls still hold the phone.

SUZIE
But I...

SAM (V.O.)
Shut up. Don't fall apart. The only people who can blow this is us. Remember?

KELLY
Right.

Suzie says nothing. Kelly nudges her.

SUZIE
Yeah, right.

SAM (V.O.)
Good. Just keep telling yourselves that, the only people who can fuck this up is us.

The line goes dead. Kelly hangs up. Suzie stares into the jacuzzi.

SUZIE
You're gonna fuck me over, aren't you?

KELLY
Oh, for Christ's sake.

SUZIE
You are.

KELLY
Are you retarded, or just brain dead from whiffin' fumes out there in the swamp...

Suzie's face goes hard.

SUZIE
That's what I am to you, isn't it? Swamp trash. It's what I am to everybody, just like my mom...

Kelly tries to put an arm around her. Suzie slaps her -- a mistake -- Kelly's bigger, faster. She slaps the side of Suzie's head, then grabs her legs, dumping her on the tile deck.

ON RAY

focusing the camera.

Suzie tries to kick Kelly.

Something changes in Kelly, a scary, calm rage.

KELLY
Stupid bitch.

She very methodically grabs Suzie's hair, dragging her into the jacuzzi, holding her under the hot water.

Suzie thrashes, breaks free, gags, arches out of the water, the wet T-shirt clinging to her small breasts.

Kelly is on her again, slaps her, puts her hands to Suzie's throat -- violently sexual in her wet bikini.

Kelly slams Suzie back onto the black-and-white tile, gets on top of her, knees between Suzie's legs, her hands on her throat.

Suzie's skinny shape writhes underneath Kelly on the gleaming tile. She gasps for air. Kelly finally lets go, but remains on her knees between Suzie's legs, breathing hard. A moment. Kelly touches Suzie's face.

KELLY
Why do you make me hurt you? It's like you want it or something.

Suzie sobs, takes Kelly's hand.

KELLY (CONT'D)
God, you are scared, aren't you?

Suzie runs her lips over Kelly's fingers, then pushes her T-shirt up, pushing Kelly's hand onto her breast.

KELLY (CONT'D)
And this is going to make you feel better, make you trust me...

Suzie nods, tearing her T-shirt, getting both of Kelly's hands onto her breasts, then pushing at Kelly's wrists, getting her to pull at her nipples, hard... Kelly obliges...

Suzie cries out in pain. Kelly's hands move down to pull off Suzie's bottoms...

ON RAY

still at it with the video, his face impassive, watching.

As Kelly pulls Suzie back into the jacuzzi, as the girls' hands slide round the curves of each other's hips, pulling themselves to each other, as the layers of steam rise to envelope them...

CUT TO:

VIDEOTAPE

Kelly and Suzie making love in the jacuzzi.

PULL BACK to REVEAL --

INT. POLICE ROOM - DAY

Gloria, Ray, Hunter watch the tape. Hunter's seen enough. He slams the stop/tape.

HUNTER
Are you crazy, Ray?

RAY
You heard Kelly say "Sam." That was Lombardo on the phone. And you saw the girls...

HUNTER
Ray. The conversation on this tape is totally unintelligible.
(beat)
What we have here, is you on the Van Ryan property, without a proper warrant, shooting a porn flick...

RAY
I don't believe I'm hearing this. A month ago you were pulling these two apart at the courthouse.
(beat)
They were acting. They were all acting, from the beginning. And we bought it, hook, line and sinker... And now they're home free with six million of Sandra Van Ryan's money.

GLORIA
Which she might have saved, if she hadn't set out to destroy the man's life.

RAY
(turning now on Gloria)
What? You wouldn't go after some guy you thought raped your daughter?
(beat)
Come on. She bought the same story we did...

Ray stops as Hunter brings the palm of his hand down on the table -- a loud SLAP.

HUNTER
Listen, both of you. You're not on a case. There is no fucking case.
(beat)
I've had it up to here with Sandra Van Ryan. Ray, you keep mucking around like this and you are going to have her suing us for invasion of privacy. Get out of these people's lives.
(MORE)

HUNTER
(beat)
Am I getting through on this?

Ray walks to the door, jerks it open --

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Sam, angry, sits in the corridor with a uniformed officer.

Hunter sees Sam, rolls his eyes.

HUNTER
Oh, Ray... no...

RAY
You think this is just about money, about us looking foolish? Question him. You're gonna find a stone cold manipulative psychopath. And those girls are going to wind up dead...

Sam lunges at Ray. The officer and Hunter restrain him. Gloria looks on, taken aback by Ray's accusations, Sam's response.

HUNTER
Mr. Lombardo, please. I'm sorry about this.

SAM
Give this idiot something to do. Let him look into the Kennedy assassination.

Ray flares, grabs Sam, shoves him against the wall, before they can be separated once again.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to Hunter)
Next time this guy drags me down here, I'll sue you. You're goddamn lucky I didn't sue you the first time!

Sam storms from the room, followed by Hunter. Ray stares after them, finally he turns, looks at Gloria, collecting himself.

RAY
Guess I kind of lost it there.

GLORIA
You could say that.

RAY
Were you ever in a situation where you could see a thing coming and you didn't do what you could to stop it?

Gloria studies Ray, clearly concerned.

GLORIA
We all have...

RAY
I mean something bad, Gloria. something bad you saw coming, and you didn't do anything, and then it happened.
(off Gloria's silence)
I did that once. I don't want to do it again.

EXT. MALL ENTRANCE - LATE AFTERNOON

Sam EXITS a building, a large package of wrapped goods beneath his arm. He looks toward the parking lot where --

Barbara Baxter stands beside the red Mercedes. She tips a valet, then starts toward the mall. She sees Sam. Their eyes meet. A moment of hesitation, as neither is quite sure what to say.

SAM
You look pretty.

BARBARA
Thanks.

Sam smiles. She points to the stuff beneath his arm.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Quite a shopping spree...

She's kidding, then seems to consider how Sam might take it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I didn't mean...

Sam laughs it off.

SAM
Hey, I've got it, I may as well spend it, right? I've always wanted to live where I could dive for my dinner.

BARBARA
And where might that be?

SAM
I was thinking, Antigua, maybe.

BARBARA
I love Antigua.
(beat)
Maybe I'll come visit you.

SAM
I i like that.

A moment, she touches his face. Sam raises a hand to cover hers, as...

... in b.g., a BLACK RANGE ROVER -- just the roof VISIBLE above the tops of the other cars, cruises the lot.

INT. RANGE ROVER - KELLY VAN RYAN

seated at the wheel, parks, stares toward the mall entrance.

ANGLE ON ENTRANCE - KELLY'S POV

Sam and Barbara stand in the orange light, hand-in-hand. Barbara leans forward, kisses Sam on the lips.

CLOSE ON KELLY

lost in thought, when she is startled by a sudden CACOPHONY of ENGINE NOISE. She turns to find...

Suzie's BUG, SPLUTTERING and BELCHING smoke, parks next to her.

Suzie opens the door of the Rover, jumps in. She's wearing a black ball cap, armed with a huge straw bag. As she settles in the seat, she lets out a long breath.

Kelly makes a face, fans the air.

KELLY
Jesus. What are you drinking?

Suzie laughs, pulls a bottle of Mad Dog 20/20 from the bag.

KELLY (CONT'D)
(looking at the bottle)
Anybody ever tell you that stuff will rot your brain?

SUZIE
What brain?

Suzie takes a big drink. Kelly shakes er head, looks back toward the entrance.

ANGLE ON ENTRANCE - KELLY'S POV

empty. Sam and Barbara are gone.

Kelly continues to stare.

SUZIE
What are you looking at?

KELLY
(starting the car)
Nothing.

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

The Atlantic rolls before a long stretch of empty sand as the last red light drains from the sky.

The Range Rover comes down onto the sand, parks.

INT./EXT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

Kelly turns off the engine. Suzie tokes on a joint, swills the MD 20/20. She gazes upon the sea, eyes at half-mast.

SUZIE
I thought we were goin' to a movie.

KELLY
I think we just need to get wasted.

Suzie shrugs, gets out. Kelly gets out with her. Suzie staggers. Kelly circles her with an arm, looks nervously around, begins leading her down the beach.

SUZIE
I wanna live at the beach someday.

KELLY
Shit.

She stops walking. Suzie takes a few more steps then turns to look at her.

KELLY (CONT'D)
I left the keys. I'll get 'em.

Suzie plops down on the sand, drinks from the bottle. She watches Kelly fading into the darkness, mumbles something beneath her breath, then lies on her back.

SUZIE'S POV - THE NIGHT SKY

The SOUND of CRASHING WAVES. She rolls to one side, looking down the beach --

Murky blackness.

She tries to focus, sits up.

SUZIE
Kelly?

She stands -- wobbly -- peers down the beach.

A shape EMERGES in the blackness, moving toward her.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
Kelly?

The shape gets closer and closer, until...

Sam Lombardo steps up to loom over Suzie.

She takes a step back.

Sam puts a hand on her shoulder. He carries something in his other hand -- hard to see on the dark beach.

SAM
Suzie, it's okay. It's me.

Suzie steadies herself. A face APPEARS behind Sam -- Kelly.

SAM (CONT'D)
I was worried about you, Suzie. I decided we should all get together, one more time, before we split up.

SUZIE
Are you mad at me?

SAM
No, no. Look, I probably should have told you a little more, about the part I intended to play.
(beat)
We'll go through it all again tonight.

Sam takes the bottle from Suzie, looks at it.

SAM (CONT'D)
This is a celebration Suzie, not a suicide pact.

He lifts the object in his other hand -- a champagne bottle.

SAM (CONT'D)
We'll chill out first, have a drink, watch the stars.

Suzie nods.

SAM (CONT'D)
Kelly, there's a beach blanket in the Jeep. Could you get it for us?

Kelly nods, starts back, looks once over her shoulder as...

Sam leads Suzie toward a huge rock formation.

SAM (CONT'D)
Let me tell you about this boat I picked out for us...

They move OUT OF SIGHT. Kelly continues to walk, back along the sand toward the cars.

INSERT - A SCREAM

A sickening hollow THWACK -- an arc of blood and two teeth fall silently on dark stone.

Kelly begins to run, stumbling through the sand to Sam's Jeep, where she pulls a big roll of clear plastic from behind the seats. She stuffs it under her arm, then runs back along the beach. As she runs, she can hear them -- more THWACKS, MOANS -- it seems like forever.

Sam APPEARS before her on the sand. The champagne bottle swings loosely at the end of one arm. It looks shiny now, dripping with Suzie's blood.

Kelly goes to him. She looks at the bottle, then throws herself against him -- a hard kiss.

SAM
I'm sorry, Kelly. I'm sorry it had to happen like this. She was losing it...

KELLY
(breathless)
There was no way. That cop would've gotten her to tell him... everything. She was weak and dumb...

She kisses him again, her hands moving over his body. Sam takes a step back, looks into Kelly's face -- the parted lips, sultry eyes -- as if seeing her for the first time -- a long beat -- at which point he turns, heaving the champagne bottle as far as he can into the black waves.

EXT. RANGE ROVER ON THE SAND - LATER

Rear hatch open -- overhead light on.

Sam and Kelly drag Suzie's body -- wrapped in the plastic -- to the rear hatch. As they heft her inside, the light catches --

SUZIE'S FACE

A mask of blood.

Kelly turns away in disgust. She goes to the passenger side door, gets in.

Sam gets in behind the wheel. For a moment the two of them just sit there, in the darkness, with the SOUND of the SEA, and their own BREATHING. Sam looks at Kelly.

She is focused on the dark Atlantic.

SAM
Are you okay?

Kelly turns to him -- an anxious face.

KELLY
(a long beat)
My mom would kill me if she knew I took the Rover.

EXT. EVERGLADES - NIGHT

Kelly waits by the Rover, swatting mosquitoes.

SLOSHING SOUNDS -- a shape approaches in the dark -- Sam in waders, muddy, tired, carrying a shovel.

EXT. GALLERIA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Almost empty of cars. The Range Rover cruises past Suzie's VW, circles, comes back. Sam jumps out, pulls on latex gloves, gets into the VW and backs it out.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL (MIAMI) - DAY

Almost dawn. A long parking lot fronts the terminal. Suzie's VW arrives, parks, Sam gets out. He goes to the waiting Range Rover, gets in and drives away.

EXT. FRONT GATE - VAN RYAN ESTATE - DAY

A THIN STREAM OF MUDDY WATER

flows beneath the gate, down the drive, toward the street.

A HAND touches the water.

PULL BACK to REVEAL the hand as that of Ray Duquette.

EXT. VAN RYAN DRIVEWAY - SAME

Ray kneels, fingers wriggling in the water, then straightens, looking toward the house where...

On the other side of the gate, Kelly, in a tube-top and tight shorts, washes mud from the Range Rover. She looks up, sees...

Ray, drying his hand on a handkerchief, walking up the drive, arriving at the wrought-iron gates.

RAY
Been four-wheelin'?

Kelly freezes -- not so cool this time.

KELLY
Get off my property.

RAY
I'm not on your property!

He grabs the wrought-iron gate -- rattles it -- harder and harder.

Kelly backs away, frightened.

EXT. SMILIN' JACK'S FISH CAMP - DAY

Gloria and Ray stand in front of the ramshackle wooden building, talking to Ruby. Walter sits nearby, sharpening a knife.

RAY
You say she didn't come back last night.

RUBY
She's been sayin' she was going to go to L.A. But I don't know. I mean all her clothes are still here. An' she's missin' her graduation.
(a long beat)
She should graduate. She's a smart girl...

Ray nods. He makes a note in his pad.

RAY
May have been she just partied too much... But we'll look into it. We find something, you'll be the first to know.

Ray turns and walks to the car. Gloria follows.

INT. CAR - SAME

Ray sits for a moment behind the wheel.

RAY
It's starting, Gloria. This is how it begins...

GLORIA
Ray. We don't know anything yet. She could be anywhere...

Ray silences her with a look.

RAY
I'm gonna take you back to the office. Will you put out a call on Suzie's car for me?

GLORIA
You have someplace to be?

Ray starts the car, doesn't answer.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
If you want company...

RAY
Just check out the car.

Gloria nods. She looks toward the camp store where the old lady can still be SEEN standing on the porch, beneath the jawbones.

EXT. BLUE BAY SCHOOL - DAY

Caps and gowns -- kids and parents on the lawn -- taking photos.

Kelly poses with Sandra. Tom Baxter aims the camera.

BAXTER
Smile.

Kelly and Sandra force miserable smiles. CLICK.

BAXTER (CONT'D)
That's one for the scrapbook.

Baxter moves away, greets Nicole and her parents.

Kelly puts some room between her and Sandra.

KELLY
You didn't have to fly back -- from -- wherever, for me...

SANDRA
I'm here to congratulate my friends and their children. I'm leaving again tonight.

KELLY
Don't bother. I'm taking a trip.

SANDRA
Where, the mall?

KELLY
A friend of mine bought a boat.

Sandra shakes her head, walks off.

Kelly turns away, freezes, as she catches sight of --

Ray talking with Jimmy.

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

Ray and Jimmy walk along the sand, moving in the direction of the big rocks. Jimmy wears sagger shorts, a surfer T-shirt. Ray wears a suit. He carries the coat over his shoulder.

JIMMY
It's those rocks, up there.

RAY
You and Suzie used to come out here together?

JIMMY
Yeah, sometimes. Lots of the kids hang out here.
(beat)
You really think something bad happened to Suzie?

RAY
(ignoring the question)
Lombardo ever come out here?

Jimmy looks at him, surprised, sees that Ray is serious. Still, the idea generates a laugh.

RAY (CONT'D)
I say something funny?

JIMMY
No. But I mean... just the idea that Mr. Lombardo would...

RAY
Way I hear it, he was pretty tight with the kids, one of the guys...

JIMMY
Yeah, but...

He breaks off as Ray kneels over a big flat rock. Ray brushes away some sand, drapes the sport coat over his arm, taking tweezers and latex gloves from the pockets.

Jimmy moves closer, curious, seeing what Ray sees.

CLOSE ON GLOVED HANDS

as tweezers pick up two teeth from a crevice in the stone.

Ray straightens, holding the teeth in the palm of his hand.

Jimmy stares at the teeth.

Ray takes a couple of bills from his pocket, hands them to Jimmy.

RAY
I'm going to be staying here, Jimmy. You can catch a bus up there at the lot, okay?

Jimmy looks a little sick, but he takes the money. He starts toward the lot.

Ray watches for a moment. Then calls out to him.

RAY
People aren't always what they appear to be, kid. Remember it.

Jimmy looks at him, trying to make sense of what Ray is saying, clearly disturbed by the implications. But he asks no more questions. He turns, trudging alone back through the sand.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN COVE - LATER

THE TEETH go into a plastic bag.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Black-and-whites, county cars -- police tape across the site.

Ray, Gloria and Hunter watch as DAVE MERRITT, a forensic expert bags the teeth. He passes the bag to Ray, then bends to the rocks where he begins to take a blood sample.

RAY
Lombardo and Kelly killed her here.

Hunter and Gloria exchange a look.

GLORIA
Two kids could've gotten into a fight, lost a couple of teeth.

RAY
Those are Suzie Toller's teeth.

GLORIA
Where's the body?

RAY
The swamp, most likely. Lombardo's a swamp rat, knows the body will never be found there. But he's made a mistake.

He holds up the evidence bag containing the teeth.

GLORIA
Her grandmother said she'd been threatening to run away. And I found the car at the Miami bus terminal.

RAY
You don't think Sam could've put it there?

HUNTER
Dust it for prints. My guess is, if anybody murdered Suzie it was probably that little sociopath Kelly Van Ryan.

Ray shakes his head; he turns to Dave, still working.

RAY
How soon can we get something?

DAVE
We can get blood type right away. Dental records will take longer. You want DNA, that can take weeks.

Ray nods, looks out to sea.

RAY (CONT'D)
Poor dumb Suzie, she never had a chance.

GLORIA
We don't know that, Ray...

Ray turns to her -- an intense look.

RAY
Kelly's next, Gloria.

HUNTER
(ice cold)
Get off this Ray, now.
(beat)
If there is any evidence here, it's for Homicide.
(turning to Dave)
You get an ID, you call me.

Dave nods. Hunter stalks off toward his car. Ray turns to Gloria.

RAY
Will you do me one favor?

GLORIA
Ray, you heard him...

RAY
What if I'm right, Gloria? What if I'm right and Hunter's wrong?
(beat)
What do you do if you see a bad thing coming?

Gloria looks toward the highway, trying to decide.

RAY (CONT'D)
Stick with me on this Gloria. I need you...

GLORIA
And if the teeth aren't Suzie's? You'll give this up?

RAY
If I'm wrong about those teeth -- it's a promise.

EXT. GLADES MOTEL - SUNSET

Sam's Jeep -- a "FOR SALE" sign in the window -- sits in the lot.

Across the road -- Gloria sits in the white Taurus.

EXT. VAN RYAN ESTATE, MAIN GATE - SUNSET

Ray sits in his truck, picks up his cellular, punches in a number.

DAVE (V.O.)
(speaker)
Merritt, Forensics.

RAY
The teeth doin' any talkin'?

DAVE (V.O.)
Ray. Stop calling. I told you the dental records will take time...

RAY
What about the blood?

DAVE (V.O.)
(a beat)
Could be hers. Types match. Could be a lot of other people's too...

RAY
(cutting him off)
Second you get something on those teeth, I want it.

Ray hangs up without waiting for a reply. He turns to the Van Ryan house, an orange light slanting across its facade.

EXT. GLADES MOTEL - NIGHT

Gloria waits in her car. She looks toward the motel.

Sam's Jeep is parked before one of the bungalows. There is a light on in the room. We can SEE inside.

Gloria sighs, picks up a pair of binoculars and trains them on the room.

ANGLE ON ROOM - GLORIA'S POV

Suitcases and boxes are stacked everywhere. Sam, bare-chested, in khaki slacks, moves about the room.

CLOSE ON GLORIA

watching Sam, as...

IN THE ROOM

The PHONE has begun to RING. Sam looks at it until it stops, then picks it up and dials a number. Kelly answers.

KELLY (V.O.)
Hello?

SAM
Hello.

KELLY (V.O.)
God, I've been calling you.

INTERCUT - KELLY/SAM PHONE CONVERSATION

Kelly is in the guest house, pacing in front of the gun case.

KELLY
I'm really nervous. That cop, he keeps watching me.

SAM
Duquette. Forget him...

KELLY
I can't help it. He gives me the creeps... I mean why was Suzie so scared of him? She's not that way. I think he did something...

SAM
Yeah, he got her busted for possession...

KELLY
I don't know... I think it was something else... Suzie says the bust was bullshit...

SAM
And you believe her?

KELLY
(a long beat -- a sigh)
I don't know.
(beat)
I want to see you...

SAM
Kelly... Relax. Take one of your mom's valium or something. In another week you get on the plane. It's over. We're rich.

KELLY
But what if they find out... God, they'd put you in the gas chamber...

Sam is about to respond, then looks out the window, sees...

ACROSS THE STREET, the white Taurus.

SAM
So if they're tapping your phone, we're dead. Stay in the guest house. Skip the graduation parties. You'll never see Duquette. Okay? I love you.

KELLY
(beat)
Okay. I love you too.

INT. TAURUS - SAME - GLORIA

sees the light go out in Sam's room, lowers her binoculars, sits for a moment, then begins to write something on a pad.

She's still at it when something KNOCKS at a FENDER. She looks up, startled, to find...

Sam in the street, still shirtless, his arms and shoulders back-lit by the neon light of the Glades Motel.

SAM
Isn't that against the law, peeking into windows?

GLORIA
(a long beat)
Suzie Toller is missing.

Sam lets out his breath, shakes his head.

SAM
How long?

GLORIA
She didn't come home last night. We found her car at the bus terminal, but nothing to suggest she bought a ticket.

SAM
Maybe she used another name.

GLORIA
Ray thinks she was murdered.

Sam shakes his head once more.

SAM
I don't know what to say...

GLORIA
You could tell me where you were last night.

Sam stares at her.

SAM
Goddamnit... I don't have to...

He stops himself, calms down.

SAM
Come here. I want you to see something.

Gloria hesitates, looks up at Sam, then puts down the phone and opens her door.

INT. GLADES MOTEL - SAME

Sam and Gloria walk among the boxes and suitcases.

GLORIA
Looks like goodbye.

Sam nods. He goes to one of his cardboard filing boxes, pulls out a file, hands it to Gloria. As she takes it, he goes to the closet, takes a shirt from a hanger.

SAM
Kelly's file. Read it. You're going to find an angry, sexually confused girl who's made threats on her mother's life and a female lover she'd never identify.

GLORIA
Suzie?

Sam shrugs.

SAM
You're telling me Ray thinks Suzie was killed. I don't have to ask you who he thinks did it, do I?
(beat)
All I'm saying is, read that, you'll have a new perspective on things.

Gloria sits on the bed, the file in her hand. She watches as Sam pulls on the shirt.

GLORIA
Why didn't you tell us about this before the trial?

Sam holds her eyes.

SAM
Then -- I still had ethical standards to protect. They meant a lot to me. Now, I don't care. And no amount of money can buy that back.

Sam is interrupted by the HONKING of a HORN. He looks outside.

ANGLE ON LOT - SAM'S POV

A taxi waits in the glow of the green neon.

Sam looks down on Gloria, seated on his bed, her skirt short enough to REVEAL shapely legs. For a moment the two hold one another's eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)
My ride. If you're not planning on arresting me, that is.

INT. RAY'S TRUCK - NIGHT - LATER

The PHONE RINGS. Ray picks it up.

RAY
Ray. What's happening?

INTERCUT - RAY/GLORIA PHONE CONVERSATION

She's still in Sam's room, the file spread across the bed.

GLORIA
I'm tired, Ray. I'm going home.

RAY
Where's Lombardo?

GLORIA
He's leaving the country. And I don't give a shit.

RAY
The blood type on the rocks matches Suzie's.

GLORIA
It's Homicide's job now, Ray, let 'em do it. I'll tell you something else, there's more to this story than you know, Ray... If Suzie is dead, I think Hunter may be on the right track...

Ray clicks off his phone.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Ray?
(nothing but dial tone)
Shit. Ray.

EXT. VAN RYAN ESTATE, FRONT GATE - NIGHT

Ray gets out of his car, presses the intercom.

SANDRA (V.O.)
(intercom)
Who is it?

RAY
(into intercom)
Detective Duquette, Ms. Van Ryan. Let me in. Now.

EXT. POOL & JACUZZI - NIGHT

Ray CROSSES the deck, Sandra at his heels.

RAY
Where is she?

SANDRA
Where she lives. In the guest house. Now will you tell me what this is about?

RAY
I'm placing your daughter under arrest.

SANDRA
You can't...

RAY
(turning, cutting her off)
Suzie Toller is dead. You don't want Kelly to be next, then take my advice. Stay out of my way.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - SAME

A cap and gown lay strewn on the sofa.

Kelly wears jeans and a bra. She looks up to see Ray moving across the tile. Her eyes go wide, then move to the gun case.

EXT. GUEST HOUSE - SAME

Sandra stands near the jacuzzi, not exactly sure what to do, watching as...

ANGLE ON GUEST HOUSE - SANDRA'S POV

Ray knocks at the French door. It swings open. He steps inside.

A long moment, then VOICES, the SOUND of things being knocked about, BREAKING GLASS.

Sandra starts toward the house then stops at the SOUND of a single GUNSHOT.

A SECOND GUNSHOT follows, then a THIRD.

The guest house door opens. Ray stumbles out, his shoulder bloody, a .357 in his hand.

FADE TO:

VIDEOTAPE - RAY'S STATEMENT

We SEE him from the waist up -- a white T-shirt, his shoulder bandaged, his arm in a sling. There are red scratch marks on his face. His eyes look blankly into the camera.

RAY
I fucked up. I lost control of the situation, the one thing they train you for... God, what did I do?

HUNTER (O.S.)
Just tell us what happened.

RAY
I told Kelly Van Ryan she was under arrest for conspiracy and murder. I did her rights.

INTERCUT --

EXT. CARIBBEAN BEACH RESORT - LONG SHOT - DAY

Perfect crescent of sand. A man in white shorts reclines in a beach chair, beneath a gaily-colored umbrella, sipping a drink.

VIDEOTAPE - RAY

RAY
Kelly went crazy, started screaming. I grabbed her, put her on the floor.

EXT. BEACH RESORT - CLOSER SHOT - DAY

Sam, in white shorts, looking good, watches a beautiful island girl in a thong bikini frolic in the surf.

She seems to sense Sam watching, turns toward the beach. Her eyes meet Sam's. She breaks into a beautiful smile.

VIDEOTAPE - RAY

HUNTER (O.S.)
She bit you?

RAY
Bit, scratched. But I had her pinned. She calmed down. I was going to cuff her... She said she thought she was going to be sick. She asked to use the bathroom.

EXT. BEACH RESORT - DAY

Sam and the island girl sit at an outdoor table. The girl wears a short, terry cloth robe, Sam the white shorts and a flowered shirt. They sip drinks. Their eyes meet. Their fingers touch.

VIDEOTAPE - RAY

RAY
I told her I was coming with her. She nodded, like she understood. We stood up together.

HUNTER (O.S.)
You didn't cuff her?

RAY
She looked shaky, but lucid. I thought, I would just go with her, stand at the door...
(shaking his head)
I think I looked away. A split second. Then, bingo. Just like that. She puts a knee into my groin.
(beat)
There was this coffee table between us and the wall. She got one foot on that thing and launched herself at the gun case. Thing had a glass door. I could hear it breaking.
(beat)
I didn't go down, but she slowed me up, just enough. Before I could get to her, she'd turned on me with this small caliber handgun. I yelled at her to put it down. She got off a shot. I took it in the shoulder. I... I had no choice. I returned fire. Two rounds, I think. In the chest.

INT. POLICE ROOM - SAME

A moment of silence, save for the BUZZING of the MACHINE. A number of plainclothes police, Hunter and Gloria among them, watch the tape.

RAY
I went there to protect her...

He hangs his head, then looks up, his eyes focusing.

RAY (CONT'D)
The teeth, were they...

HUNTER (O.S.)
Suzie Toller's. And that's the only thing saving your sorry ass.

EXT. BOAT HARBOR (CARIBBEAN ISLAND) - DAY

Brilliant sun on turquoise water. A few boats anchored in a lagoon. A quiet place.

Heading out -- a forty-foot sloop, Sam at the helm.

INT. HEARING ROOM - DAY

Gloria, Baxter, a tearful Sandra, sit in seats, watch as --

Ray stands before a panel, A SUIT, A CHIEF in uniform, Hunter.

Ray wears a suit, his hair neatly trimmed. His arm is no longer in a sling, but one of his hands is still bandaged.

CHIEF
Detective Duquette, our investigation concludes that this was a good shooting. But that's irrelevant. You were not assigned to this case -- whatever you imagined this case to be. And now two young women are dead. You are terminated with forfeiture of pension and benefits.

Ray looks at the floor.

Hunter coughs. His hands rest on a file -- we SEE the video cassette inside -- labeled "TOLLER/VAN RYAN -- CONFIDENTIAL."

HUNTER
Suzie Toller's teeth and blood were found near the area known as Stoner Rocks. Suzie's blood was found in the Van Ryan Range Rover. This, in conjunction with evidence obtained by Detectives Duquette and Perez has led this office to the conclusion that Susan Marie Toller was murdered by Kelly Lanier Van Ryan...

Sandra chokes back a sob. She gets to her feet, to be led from the room by Tom Baxter.

Gloria Perez watches, a sad look in her eye, then turns to look at Ray. His back is to her -- the broad shoulders, expensive suit. His hands are clasped behind his back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLUE BAY CEMETERY - KELLY'S FUNERAL - DAY

Gloria stands among a considerable number of mourners. She is just back from Sandra and Tom Baxter, who, in turn, are just back from the open grave.

As Gloria watches, Sandra looks off to the side, where something catches her eye. Gloria sees her start, then follows her gaze.

ANGLE ON CEMETERY - GLORIA'S POV

On a rise some fifty yards from the Van Ryan plot, two people stand near an old oak -- Ruby and Walter.

When Gloria looks back at Sandra, it seems to her as if the woman has slumped against Tom Baxter, who now stares at the two people on the rise as if, by doing so with sufficient intensity, he might make them disappear.

Gloria turns to the grave site, her eye lingers on the open grave, then moves to the huge marker which dominates the Van Ryan family plot and, in fact, the entire scene.

ANGLE ON MARKER

The angel Gabriel, trumpet in hand, carved in relief upon a huge obelisk of black marble. Beneath the angel is a carved scroll and upon it the words:

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE," and below that: "WILLIAM TECUMSEH VAN RYAN. MAY HE REST IN PEACE."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A BEACH - NIGHT

Sam Lombardo walks along a moonlit lagoon, headed toward a lone bungalow.

The bungalow is simple, picturesque -- whitewashed walls, a thatched roof. A patio opens onto the beach.

EXT. PATIO - SAME

As Sam steps in off the sand, he sees something and stops short.

Wet spots lead toward the bungalow.

Sam listens. Everything is quiet.

INT. BUNGALOW - SAME

Sam ENTERS in a room lit only by the blue light of a large aquarium. He listens once more, hears it -- RUNNING WATER.

He moves down a short hallway, observes the light which spills from beneath a bedroom door. He pushes it open, goes inside.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

He CROSSES the room.

The bathroom door is ajar, the room leaking steam.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Sam steps inside, looks at the shower stall -- an indistinct shape moves there in the steam.

Sam watches, then jerks open the shower door. The steam clears -- REVEALING a tall, athletic body, and now the face --

Ray Duquette, grinning at Sam out of the swirling steam.

RAY
Buy you a drink?

Sam takes a step back.

SAM
Jesus. I wasn't expecting you 'til tomorrow.

Ray turns off the water, steps out of the stall, wrapping himself in a towel. There's a fresh, raised scar across one shoulder and Ray winces a little as he tucks the towel about his waist. He looks at himself in the mirror, touching the scar.

RAY
Nice girlfriend you had there.

Sam just looks at him.

SAM
Yeah, well, you fixed that.
(beat)
What the hell happened, anyway?

RAY
The bitch shot me, is what happened.

Sam shakes his head, walks back into the bedroom. Ray follows.

RAY (CONT'D)
Hey, what did you want me to do, die?

SAM
Well, shit, you're the cop, they don't teach you to disarm people, shoot them in the leg or something? You weren't supposed to kill her for Christ's sake.

Now Ray just looks at Sam, his eyes narrowing.

RAY
Did you become squeamish about these things before or after you bludgeoned little Suzie Toller to death with a wine bottle?
(off Sam's silence)
Jesus, man.
(MORE)

RAY
It couldn't have worked out better. They're convinced Kelly whacked Suzie. I can't talk 'em out of it.
(beat)
We should be celebrating. This thing worked out just like you said, only better.

SAM
Kelly was supposed to be framed, not killed.
(beat)
What I'm telling you is, I don't like surprises.

Ray walks to a dresser where a bottle of champagne sits in a bucket of ice. He opens the bottle, fills two glasses. He hands one of the glasses to Sam.

RAY
Every cloud has a silver lining, partner. Here's to no loose ends.

He raises his glass in a toast.

Sam looks at it, then raises his glass as well. Ray smiles. Sam doesn't.

SAM
Here's to no more surprises.

Ray shrugs. The two men's eyes meet. They touch glasses and drink.

EXT. SMALL BOAT HARBOR (ISLAND) - DAY

Sam and Ray work on the deck of Sam's sloop, stowing gear, loading supplies.

The boat's mast shines in the sunlight before a brilliant sky. Palms sway. The men work in silence.

EXT. SMILIN' JACK'S FISH CAMP - DAY

Gloria drives up in the white Taurus. She parks before the ramshackle old building and the gator pen.

Walter is in the pen. Ruby stands just outside of it. She looks toward the road as Gloria gets out, then back to the pen.

Gloria comes down the bank to stand beside Ruby. She's just in time to see the huge old reptile raise itself, hissing, on its front legs, jaws sprung wide. The women watch as Walter sticks his arm into the gator's mouth.

RUBY
Gator can't see what's in front of it for shit. They see out the sides.
(beat)
That one don't even know Walter's arm's in his mouth.

GLORIA
What if something distracts it and it snaps anyway?

RUBY
Then I guess Walter can kiss that arm of his goodbye.
(loud enough for Walter to hear)
He don't use it for no good deeds anyway.

Walter looks at the ladies, picks up the stick and sweeps it between the gaping jaws, which snap in its wake.

RUBY (CONT'D)
You come all the way out here to watch Walter?

GLORIA
I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions.

RUBY
About Suzie?

GLORIA
Actually, I was wondering if I might ask you about Ray Duquette.

RUBY
(a long beat)
He used to come around here. He had a thing going with one of the girls over at the Glades.

Ruby nods toward the motel, a bitter smile on her face.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Got sort of hung up on her, from what I hear.

GLORIA
She still work there?

RUBY
No. Not after that night.
(a long beat)
I don't know what happened. Maybe he caught her with some john...
(MORE)

RUBY
All I know is, the next morning the girl was gone and there was a dead boy... Indian kid named Davy. Used to live down the road there in a wrecked car. Him and Suzie were at the Glades that night.
(beat)
It was right after that, Ray got Suzie busted and sent her away. That's what there is to say about Ray Duquette.

GLORIA
Was there ever any kind of investigation...

Ruby cuts her off with a short laugh.

RUBY
Duquette always claimed the kid was dusted, came after him with a knife. But it was Jack's Fish Camp... This could be the moon for all most people care.
(a long beat)
Wasn't supposed to be like that though. This place was supposed to be something once. There were going to be roads and houses. There was going to be a town. They were going to call it Salt Creek.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

From the surface of the sea -- the emerald island in the distance. The bow of the sloop comes INTO FRAME.

On board -- Sam stands in the cockpit, at the helm. Ray lounges on the deck. The boat sails easily before the wind.

SAM
Ray, you see that winch by your head? Take a couple of turns on it for me, she's luffing.

Ray cranes his neck to look at the winch.

RAY
You mean this thing?

SAM
Yes, we call it a winch.
(pointing at pieces of the rigging)
And these are shrouds, and these are stays.

RAY
I thought this was supposed to be a vacation. Why didn't you buy a nice big power boat?

SAM
Come on, man. I'll make a sailor out of you yet.

RAY
Yeah, or get me drowned.

Ray kneels. He begins to tighten the winch.

Sam watches him for a moment, then reaches around behind his back to unhook the short line which holds the boom.

The mainsail catches wind, swinging the boom in a wide arc, directly at Ray.

Ray looks up, sees it coming just in time to catch it on his arm.

The blow is enough to send him sprawling through the lifelines, where he just manages to grab one of the nylon cords.

Sam ducks as the boom continues to swing erratically above the deck, watching as Ray hauls himself on board.

The boat no longer driven by the wind, bobs up and down on a small ground swell.

The two men face each other.

SAM
Jesus, man... You okay?

RAY
That how you planned it? You take out Suzie, get me to hang it on Kelly, then dump me in the ocean...

SAM
Come off it, man... It was an accident.

Ray nods, then reaches down, pulls off the winch handle and starts with it toward Sam.

Sam looks around. He jerks open a storage compartment. A diver's weight belt tumbles out. Sam grabs it, swings it over his head in circles, letting the weight pick up momentum, preparing to throw.

Ray crouches, still brandishing the winch handle. The boom sweeps the deck.

Sam throws the belt.

Ray grabs a shroud, dances out of the way, then steadies himself, a mean grin spreading across his face.

There's no time for Sam to look for anything else.

Ray moves quickly across the deck -- a menacing sight -- tall, well-muscled, the handle gleaming in his hand.

Sam pulls himself out of the cockpit. Ray jumps in. But that's as far as he gets.

WHOOSH -- A spear pierces Ray's thigh. He screams, goes down, the handle skittering across the deck.

Ray follows it with his eyes, reaching out, then freezing as he sees something else. He draws in his hand as if bitten.

RAY
You... You're...

He scuttles backward, pulling himself onto the deck, clutching at his leg which squirts blood as if an artery has been severed. But his eyes never leave the hatchway leading belowdecks.

RAY (CONT'D)
You're dead... for godsake...

The boat heels over. The spear in Ray's thigh bangs against the edge of the cockpit. He grimaces in pain as...

Suzie Toller steps up from belowdecks. She's wearing a bikini and showing a nice tan. She's carrying Sam's new spear gun, a fresh spear at the ready.

SUZIE
Rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated.
(to Sam)
Nice move. Good thing I was here to save your incompetent ass.

Sam secures the boom. Ray stares at Suzie, his face twisted with some combination of pain, rage and fear.

RAY
You... I should've killed you myself. I should never have left it up to him...

SUZIE
Shoulda, coulda, woulda...
(to Sam)
Get him in the water.

Sam starts for Ray.

RAY
Sam, for Christ's sake...

Sam's feet slide in the bloody smear. He stops.

Ray clings to a safety line.

SAM
I can't.

WHOOSH -- A second spear penetrates Ray's shoulder. He loses his grip. The boat heels over, dumping Ray into the water.

Suzie puts down her spear gun. She goes to a storage locker, takes out a bait bucket. She steps up on the deck.

Ray is floating not far from the boat, the water going red around him. He calls out...

RAY
Sam, for godsake...

SUZIE
Hey, Ray. Guess whose name is on the numbered bank account besides yours and Sam's?

She raises the bucket, heaves bloody chum into the water.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
I like these joint survivorship accounts. Something unfortunate happens to one of the signatories, the others don't have to worry. Are you worrying, Ray?

She heaves more chum -- a big red slurp across Ray's face.

Ray gasps, goes under, thrashing around in the red slick.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Men, use 'em abuse 'em lose 'em.

INSERT - SHARKS

from underwater, in a frenzy, rip a human body into a bloody cloud.

EXT. SAILBOAT - LATER

Suzie comes up from below with a champagne bottle and glasses, already filled.

SUZIE
Feeling better?

Sam gazes out to sea.

SAM
That was about as grim as it gets.

SUZIE
The guy was history when he killed Kelly. You knew that.

SAM
But then you knew what he was like all along... Maybe his killing Kelly was a thing you had counted on...

SUZIE
But then it is better this way, don't you think? No loose ends.

Sam just looks at her.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
What?

SAM
That was the same thing Ray said.

Suzie smiles -- showing the big gap where her two front teeth used to be.

SUZIE
Poor Ray.
(a beat)
Come on Sam, we did it. We put the screws to the Van Ryans. We won.

She hands a glass to Sam, takes the other. He puts it to his lips, suddenly hesitates, thinks, sniffs the glass.

A moment. Suzie shakes her head.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
Talk about paranoid. Now are you gonna teach me to sail this big old boat or not?

Sam downs his drink.

SAM
Okay. Grab that winch there.

Suzie gives him a pouty look.

SAM (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

SUZIE
Fuck the winch. I wanna drive.

Sam sighs.

SAM
Okay. Come here and take the helm. I'll get the winch.

Suzie gives him her best, gap-toothed smile, then comes forward to take the gleaming chrome wheel, as Sam scrambles up on deck, kneeling where Ray had kneeled before him to set the jib.

Suzie watches -- a long beat, then, slowly reaches behind her, unhooking the line which holds the boom...

ANGLE ON BOOM

sweeping the deck -- coming right at us, blotting out the sky.

EXT. SMILING JACK'S - SUZIE'S ROOM - DAY

Gloria sits on Suzie's bed, books spread out around her. Ruby stands beside her.

RUBY
You asked if Suzie knew about the Salt Creek land deal? Girl read every book she could find on it, the Van Ryans too.

Ruby takes a photo album from among the books, opens it, tosses a photograph on the bed. It is one we have seen before.

ANGLE ON PHOTO

A stately old gentleman in a three-piece suit. White hair, a white handlebar mustache. A derby on his knee, a walking stick at his side. He stares out at the world from a high-backed wicker chair, flanked by potted palms and two small terriers.

Across the bottom of the picture is the name -- "WILLIAM TECUMSEH VAN RYAN." And beside that, in another hand -- "Dear old Dad."

RUBY
Wasn't enough Van Ryan had to destroy the people who invested here. He got to be old, he and his rich cronies would come down here, hunt and whore, act like assholes. One trip he showed up with this young girl he'd picked up somewhere, gotten her pregnant then dumped her in the swamp.
(indicating the photo)
That came with her.

GLORIA
And the child...

RUBY
She had it, before she drank herself to death. Wasn't exactly a love child...

GLORIA
Suzie.
(beat)
Then you're not her grandmother...

RUBY
Raised her like she was, but no, Walter's my only child.
(beat)
He was a good boy, till the army took him.

Gloria looks once more at the old photograph.

GLORIA
So Suzie and Sandra Van Ryan were half-sisters.

RUBY
And the other girl, Kelly. Suzie's niece.

Gloria stands, a little weary. Ruby walks her from the room.

GLORIA
Thank you for talking to me, Ruby. I am sorry about Suzie, she...

They have gotten to the main room and Gloria stops short, noticing for the first time that the beat-up old black-and-white TV has been replaced by a high-tech, giant-screen television.

RUBY
You okay?

GLORIA
I'm fine. Nice TV.

The old lady nods, walks her outside.

EXT. SMILIN' JACK'S FISH CAMP - DAY

The dusty road, the little dock, the gator pen.

RUBY
There's an old saying from the Everglades -- virtue may be missed but sin can't hide.
(a long beat)
Folks pay in the end.

Gloria nods. She is distracted by a movement in the gator pen.

CLOSE ON PEN

For a moment there is nothing more than a few ripples across the surface of the pond which lies inside the pen, then, slowly, the GATOR'S EYES -- cold, reptilian, unblinking, rising up to gaze across the oily waters.

HARD CUT TO:

BLACK. CREDITS...

for about ten seconds, enough to fool the audience, then...

INTERCUT - LIKE OUTTAKES...

... PIECES OF SCENES WE COULDN'T SEE, or SCENES WE DIDN'T SEE AT ALL, in reverse chronological order.

INT. GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Kelly is frantically trying to unlock the gun case as Ray comes through the French doors. She can't get it done. He's there in an instant.

She screams, backs away, then watches as Ray stops, wraps a hanky around his hand and breaks the glass.

He takes out a small caliber handgun, checks the clip, aims the gun at his own shoulder and fires.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- then

EXT. EVERGLADES - DAY

A Jeep and a truck parked in the mud. Sam and Ray meet under heavy, moss-draped cypress. Sam hands Ray a plastic bag -- the teeth.

SAM
You know the place I'm talking about -- the big rocks?

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- then

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

SAM & SUZIE

behind the big rocks. He's got vise-grip pliers jammed in her mouth. Suzie moans, for real. He loosens his grip.

SUZIE
You've got the pressure too tight. You'll crush the fucking evidence.

Sam takes a breath, prepares to try again. Suzie pops a couple of pills with gulps of wine. Sam goes to it once more.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- then

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Kelly and Sam on the floor, naked. He's on her from the rear. It's getting wild. He suddenly stops, rolls to the floor.

SAM
We gotta stop. I'm gonna come.

Kelly laughs, straddles him.

KELLY
That never seemed to worry you at the Glades.

SAM
That's not your line.

KELLY
Say you love me.

SAM
(a beat)
I love you. Now give me the line.

KELLY
(a whiny voice)
No little girl can ever make me come.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- then

EXT. THE GLADES MOTEL - NIGHT

Suzie's VW is parked across the street, in the shadows of tall trees. She and Sam sit inside, watching as...

Ray Duquette EXITS a bungalow, a sport coat over his arm. He heads for Jim's Recovery Room. In another moment, a young hooker in a leather miniskirt walks out of the same bungalow.

SUZIE
Seems to like some of the same places you do. Funny you never met.

SAM
Yeah, real funny. You're wrong about this, I could get busted on the spot.

SUZIE
Trust me, the guy's dirty. He'll like it. Especially the part about offing me.
(beat)
Now get out of here. Go make yourself a new friend.

INT. JIM'S RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Ray is at the bar. Sam sits down next to him. A moment of silence, the twang of a country JUKE BOX -- then...

SAM
Buy you a drink?

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- then

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - BLUE BAY SCHOOL

Suzie Toller framed in the doorway. She walks in.

SUZIE
You like bein' a caddy for rich kids' problems?

Sam just looks at her.

SUZIE (CONT'D)
I've seen you out there in your old air boat, thinking about what might have been, old man Van Ryan hadn't fucked you out of it.

SUZIE
(beat)
What if I told you I had a way we could get a big piece of it back?

SAM
We?

SUZIE
Well, I'd need the famous Lombardo charm, not that you'd have to do anything you haven't done already.

She takes an envelope from her notebook, tosses it in front of Sam. Pictures slide onto his desk -- Sam and Kelly -- in various poses of coked-out debauchery at the Glades Motel.

SAM
(white-faced)
How...

SUZIE
Walter. He's been aimin' that Brownie through knotholes for years. I saw these, I knew he'd finally struck gold.
(beat)
I can't decide which came out better, that little straw Kelly's got up her nose, or that vibrator you've got up her ass. What do you think, Mr. Lombardo?

SAM
(a long beat)
I think there's some things you do, you don't want to see yourself doing them.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- then

INT. JIM' RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Sam lounges in a booth. He looks hot, bored. He stirs a drink.

Kelly walks in out of the light. She is looking a little strung out, a big straw bag slung over one shoulder, but oh, so sexy in skimpy cutoffs and cowboy boots -- long legs flashing as she nears Sam's booth. Sam looks up, as...

KELLY
I'm running away.

SAM
(a beat)
You think that's wise?

KELLY
(sitting next to him)
Um-huh. And guess what else?
(reaching into her bag)
I have toys.

She takes out a small bag of white powder, taps out a line on the table top.

Sam looks at it. He looks at Kelly. He's had a few drinks.

SAM
(a long beat)
Well, I guess one taste wouldn't hurt.

END CREDITS.

The seal comes up. It's over. They head for the lobby -- but --

EXT. SMILIN' JACK'S FISH CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria stands beneath the jawbones, looking toward the channel as the shadows lengthen across the dirt road.

ANGLE ON CHANNEL

Walter hangs a "FOR SALE" sign on a small, shabby sloop.

Gloria CROSSES the road.

GLORIA
Selling your boat?

Walter shoots her a look.

WALTER
This was Suzie's boat. Guess she won't be needin' it.

GLORIA
I wouldn't have guessed Suzie was a sailor.

Walter finishes with the sign.

WALTER
Old lady had her tested once. They said her IQ was way up there, round two hundred or some such shit.
(beat)
That girl could do just about anything, she put her mind to it.

Gloria has nothing to say. She stares at the little sloop bobbing in the muddy water of the swamp.

EXT. THE CARIBBEAN - WIDE ANGLE - SEA LEVEL - DAY

A head bobs among the groundswells.

CLOSE - SAM LOMBARDO

sucking wind through a smashed face, struggling to stay afloat, as...

... in the distance, the sloop races toward a far horizon.

ANGLE ON SLOOP - HELICOPTER SHOT

Suzie, at the helm, looking good, face to the wind.

END

(really)